FROM VICTIMS TO VICTORS: VINDICATING AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN FROM THE TERROR OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ABUSE

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ABSTRACT

FROM VICTIMS TO VICTORS: VINDICATING AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN FROM THE TERROR OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ABUSE

by

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United Theological Seminary, 2013

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This Doctor of Ministry project will be tested using qualitative research seeking outcomes of validity and effectiveness. Two sample test groups consisting of an at large and a group of eight pre-identified women will be tested. The at large group will complete a survey tool. The group of eight will complete written and oral interviews, pre and post surveys, self-reporting forms and the revival effectiveness rating scale. The research indicates that overall voices were reclaimed with catharsis happening in a safe church environment. The surveys support high rating scores from the revival. The small group did not yield intended outcomes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To William and Willie C. Townsend. "I am who I am because of you". To Joseph L. Havis and Bennie Havis Walker, you taught me how to be tough unknowingly. To my sisters and brothers, you collaterally and unknowingly contributed as my siblings. To Central CME Church, the Victorious Voices Choir, and St. James CME Church, your abundant grace and support while doing this project was appreciated.

To Bishop Paul A. G. Stewart—Presiding Prelate of the Third Episcopal District of the CME Church, thank you for supporting education and encouraging me to speed up my education track completing my Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees. To Presiding Elder Rev. Dr. Philip D. Washington, thank you for urging and assuring me that I had the right stuff to complete the Doctor of Ministry degree.

Thank you Dr. Jason Vickers, Dr. Darrin Moore and Dr. Donnell Moore who helped me through this process.

To Okima Michele Havis, my only child and greatest supporter. You are a superstar in the making and waiting. We nearly grew up together. Not exactly but nearly! You are simultaneously fearless and gentle. I was motivated to keep on writing when you let me know that after reading my few first few draft pages; transformation happened. Thank you for carefully selecting and teaching the music to the Victorious Voices Choir for the very first revival. Thank you for the careful labor and creativity you used in developing the revival program. Tell your story! It needs to be heard.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to all the girls and women who ever lived in terror and fear. The project and revival is dedicated to all victims who finally do become victors. It is also dedicated to everyone that participated and supported this Move of God. God has not left you.

INTRODUCTION

The writer is often invited to speak, teach, preach and exhort in diverse preaching environments. Depending upon the venue, the writer sends the biography that she believes will meet the needs of her audience. She does this because her background is ladened with pathos, Eros, logos and agape formation, thus equipping her to speak to various groups. The writer lives after existing for many years and thrives after surviving. The writer is an African American survivor of sexual abuse, domestic violence; a woman and a member of the clergy.

While the content of this project can reach and impact people from all racial and ethnic groups; the researcher identifies with the pain and suffering of African American women. The writer recognizes that African American men and other groups of people are victimized, debilitated and suffer as well. The writer in no means wishes to discriminate or minimize others suffering and need for help. The writer is committed to this project and its longevity because she deeply identifies with those for whom she writes.

The writer believes that she ought to serve the Lord with gladness and prides herself on how her current ministry reflects that. There is a colloquial expression that says, *What you see is what you get.* However the writer is not really certain if that is true. The writer believes that what we reveal to the world is not really who we are.

When the writer listens as others describe her, they describe her as a tall, elegant, classy, and attractive. Others say that she is an articulate woman of purpose who can

preach and teach with the best of them. If outsiders looked deeply under the textures of those descriptions of poise, professionalism, dignity, education, accomplishment and leadership qualities and rich connections to the church, they would not know those attributes were earned the hard and grueling way.

The writer fully understands the impact of not being fully whole and believing she was less than. The writer fully understands the compressed ache[1] of Han. The writer fully understands how seeking, searching and aching, for Soterios, though not knowing that she was, takes a woman living in paralysis; down the road to spiritual devastation. The writer fully understands that when others throw their dirt upon you, you begin to own their dirt and are altered from who God intended you to be. The writer also understands how coming to Christ and developing a relationship with God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, allows a victim to become victorious. As the writer experienced becoming a new creature in Christ (2 Cor 5:17) by the Holy Spirit making an incision into her damaged soul and spirit; removing shame, devastation and terror, she transformed into a healthy whole woman. This writers understanding of healthy woman's power is what drives this entire document.

This church needs renewal; therefore a project such as this is needed. The writer agrees with current literature stating that church attendance is in decline. The writer personally believes a contributing factor to the decline is that postmodern churches have moved away from the mission of the early church; salvation, liberation and education. Peasants, those seeking justice and even some nobility connected with Jesus` ministry and wanted Shalom. The writer believes the same is currently true. In postmodern times

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[1]Andrew Sung Park, *From Hurt to Healing* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 11.

people arrive at churches spiritually depleted seeking salvation, liberation and education desiring to get their spiritual and then physical needs met.

An unscientific and subjective observation would indicate that in most any African American church denomination in the United States, more women attend and occupy the pews and seats than men. The writer wonders why. She wonders if women attend church out of tradition, seek something useful to do, are searching for social networks or seeking to get deep unmet spiritual needs met. She wonders if perhaps some women hope that one day someone will look into their eyes and see the pain masked under their clothes and fashion; their false bravado and false meekness. The writer wonders if these women hope and pray that someone will look underneath their presentation to the world and take a deeper look. Perhaps they hope someone will finally realize that there is someone else sleeping underneath the skin they live in and are waiting for a ministry to address their specific unmet spiritual needs. They know they need renewing but no one seems to really know how to renew them in the way they need renewing.

The writer grew attending church and religion in her home. She attended Christian religious schools and continuous religious instructions upon entering public schools. Her religious experiences did not prepare her for sins of early childhood sexual, physical, verbal and emotional abuses thrust upon her by others. As an adult the writer was living and operating in the church but yet secretly suffering from the aftermath of the cloak of secrecy of sins dared not named or spoken aloud. Secrets kept her captive and fearful of speaking aloud these heinous sins apprehensive of how the church would react. Solace and support was found with groups outside the church but felt unvindicated

because outside secular groups never really met her deep unmet spiritual needs. She knew God, loved her church and wanted her church to offer this.

The writer does not have recollections of any church or denominational leaders addressing these issues. This was a forbidden unspoken message. And when she tried to bring the subject up, the church was visibly uncomfortable. Perhaps the church did not know how to respond or was not ready to admit that women in the church were suffering. The writer believes that by not addressing the topic, it also caused the church to miss the opportunity to have a voice. Because the writer believes that in spite of early trauma, she was able to function actively in church, love the Lord, was intelligent, reasonably sophisticated, savvy, presentable and marketable; she reasoned that other girls and women in the church; not living in shelters or strung out on drugs and alcohol mind you, perhaps felt similarly.

After considerable research the writer was commissioned by the Holy Spirit to write about this subject to free other girls and women because the masses do not understand the spiritual devastation and paralysis this physical sin and crime causes. The masses do not understand how these sins, the misuse of power, thrust upon them cause girls to operate outside who God intended them to be. The masses do not understand that these sins steal victorious living from girls who grew into incomplete women. The masses do not understand how this devastation creates victims rather than fruitful victorious living. "One out of every six American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime (14.8% completed rape; 2.8% attempted rape)."[2]

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[2]National Institute of Justice & Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, *Prevalence, Incidence and Consequences of Violence Against Women Survey,* 1998.

Victimized women have been broken and need more for their spiritual development. Uncovering abuse through prophetic specialized preaching and revival allows bruised and broken girls and women to hear a message that speaks to their needs so they will be able to experience religion that provides recovery.[3] It is easier to report domestic violence, which has had a light shed on it than sexual abuse. Sexual abuse is still more cloaked in shame and secrecy and often goes unreported because the victims are ashamed to disclose.

Sexual abuse is a traumatic intrusion into spiritual development and human growth, radically altering people from whom God intended them to be. The sinful intrusion creates victims rather than victors. Sexual abuse contributes to people believing that they cannot be healed, fixed, realigned and or is beyond salvation. This is untrue.

> Christianity is a religion of salvation, which means that it is opposed to the perspective of fatalism (nothing can be saved) and pantheism (nothing needs to be saved). Christianity, this is to say, takes sin and evil in the world seriously but believes that the world is destined for redemption.[4]

The project addresses this predicament offering renewal of spirit to African American girls and women with a specialized three-day revival. Every aspect of the revival will be tailored to the needs of abused girls and women providing specially selected scriptures, special dance, prepared music, liturgies and testimonies. When their needs are met the, an evangelistic outbreak will happen because individual women will take an important first step moving from paralysis to analysis to cantharis and then victory. This specialized revival helps women find their lost voices so vindication and healing may occur. The cloak of secrecy surrounding this sin thrust upon innocent girls is

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[3]Rudolph McKissick United Theological Seminary, Chapel Preaching, 2012.

[4]Michael Kinnamon, Eden Theological Seminary, Class notes, 2005.

uncovered so victorious living may begin. If merely one woman obtains a transformative and cathartic experience she becomes empowered to lead others out of the darkness toward Christ.

There is a particular understanding that the person of the Holy Spirit has the power to release what is needed to reclaim the Imago Dei; made in the image of God. If just one woman gets healed and made whole she can save her family. Once that woman's family is healed, the family can save their church. That church can save a neighborhood. The neighborhood can save a community. The community can save a city or town. The city or town can save a state. The state can save a nation. One nation can save another nation and then save the world. This is evangelism at its best and this renewal will happen because the researcher dares to believe that helping one woman can save the world and renew the life of her church. At the onset of this paper, it is clear that the person of the Holy Spirit has the control and power over the success of the course of human beings.

In chapter one, Ministry Focus, the reader is given a clear view of where this important work will happen. Central CME Church in Detroit, Michigan is the context for this project. This chapter allows readers to understand work formation and what inspired the writer to select this topic.

Chapter two, The State of the Art in This Ministry Project, will explore the various ways damaged women present themselves at church. This chapter discusses at length what other scholars say about the writer's selected topic. It shows how the writer has lent her voice to the subject. New insights will occur as the writer addresses the specialized needs of a newly defined target population.

In chapter three, Theoretical Foundations, the history of sexual violence and terror directed towards women and their coping strategies are discussed. This chapter demonstrates violence against women dating back as early as the time of the Kings of Israel. The project revival demonstrates how it is connected back to the monastic movement. Biblical texts are used to support that sexual terror against women is not a new phenomenon and the Bible teach that recovery is available.

Chapter four, Methodology, discusses how the project and fieldwork will provide meaningful research and outcomes that represent a replicable model for other congregations to follow. It shows what conclusions may be gathered as a result of the research. Included are the timeline and outcomes of the research model.

In chapter five, Field Experience, discusses the complete descriptive day-to-day account of the project revival. It provides illustrations and illuminates how the revival program was laid out.

Finally, in chapter six, Reflections, Summaries and Conclusions, the writer provides a critical reflection of her entire experience and react to the previous work done. It allows the writer to critique, review and congratulate herself for the work put forth.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Context

St. James Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church currently meets for worship in a temporary worship location at 3116 Pierson Road in Flint, Michigan. St. James is considered a landmark or first church in the Mid-Michigan District of the Michigan- Indiana region of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. This means it has the largest building, membership, and historical linkage to the CME denomination. It is assessed larger payments to the denomination because it is the first church. St. James owns its own building located at 310 Wood Street in downtown Flint in a depressed area. The church owns several lots surrounding the church. The Salem Housing Authority is constructing new housing and the city is currently redeveloping the area near where the historic building is located.

While this church is considered a first church the membership does not share nor recognize the prominence of this title. The church does not understand the financial and other obligations the Episcopacy attaches to this church. The paper census is three hundred and seventeen. About fifty-to-seventy persons attend Sunday worship every Sunday. The church's consistent membership consists of a group of seniors ranging from the age of sixty (60) through ninety-five (95) years of age. There are three younger families. A handful of young adults, one youth and several small children attend Sunday

worship. The families live closer to the current worship location than they did commuting to the building located at 310 Wood.

Church History

The St. James CME Church was organized as James Chapel Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in 1921. Reverend L. K. Fews in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Nelson led the Church organization. There were eight people present at the first service: Mrs. L. K. Fews, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Nelson, Mr. and Mrs. Peoples, Mr. and Mrs. Davison and Mrs. Dora Price.

Earlier services were held in a school building on Elm Park and later services were held in a school building on the corner of North Saginaw Street and Stewart Avenue.

In 1924, under the leadership of Reverend J. S. Eliot, a building was purchased at 3601 Grant Street. In 1941, under the leadership of Reverend David E. Fullwood, two buildings were purchased on the corner of North Street and Pasadena Avenue at 1144 Campau Street. In 1960, under the pastorate of Reverend T. R. Taylor, the name of the church was changed to St. James Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. In June 1971, under the leadership of Reverend James W. Bennett, property was purchased at the corner of Lyon and Wood Streets. St. James worshipped in that space for many years.

St. James CME Church hosted its first Michigan-Indiana Annual Conference in August 1971 with about fifteen hundred people in attendance. Since that time the church has hosted a regular schedule of various Episcopal and Annual Conference meetings.

Many laypersons, pastors, presiding elders and bishops have contributed greatly to the growth and substantiation of the St. James Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

From 1921 through 2011, St. James has had eight Presiding Bishops, eight Presiding Elders and thirty-eight pastors. Reverend Patricia A. Havis is the thirty-eighth pastor of St. James.

Building Issues

The older members have memories of the days of prominence. This remembrance seems to place blinders on the current 2011 building needs. When Reverend Patricia A. Havis was appointed to the church as Pastor of St. James, in August 2009, the Stewards and Trustees of the church approached her. They inquired about leaving the building because of building conditions. Mold, asbestos and roof leakage were causing people to become ill. Maintenance cost such as heating, air conditioning, utilities, insurance and other cost affiliated with the church were a drain on the churches finances.

Dwindling membership created a major financial strain on the congregation. The officers of the church recognized the churches indebtedness and saw no way to recover or build a treasury if they continued to remain in this historical building. The insurance company revoked the churches insurance policy deeming it uninsurable. The church conference the voting body of the church voted to leave the building.

In January 2010 St. James vacated the building and worshipped at Faith United Methodist Church located at 2626 Coldwater Road for an 8:30 A.M. service. Pastor Monique Turner welcomed St. James into their worship space. Because Faith United Methodist Church worshipped at the traditional 11:00 A.M. worship time St. James could worship only at 8:00 A.M. Fifty-seven members were present at the first worship service at this location. The distance created travel barriers for the membership. The building temperature was kept too cold for St. James seniors; therefore the congregation relocated

to Salem Lutheran Church, located at 2610 Martin Luther King Avenue and shared the location with that congregation. Pastor Monica Villarreal arrived as the new pastor, after St. James had already moved in. The Salem Lutheran worship council and both the council approved the space and the new pastor welcomed the St. James community. Because Salem worshipped at the traditional worship time of 11:00 A.M. St. James was given 2:00 P.M. for worship. Attendance dropped dramatically because of the time slot. Attendance dropped to thirty-five faithful people that were present at the first sermon at St. James. Pastor Havis asked to be moved to the 8:00 A.M. worship time but Pastor Villarreal did not approve. She explained that her Senate issued a clear guideline to her regarding the mission and growth of Salem. Pastor Villarreal needed the 8:00 A.M. hour for church expansion.

St. James moved again to another worship location at 3116 Pierson Road, the old Five–Fold Ministry building, where they are now temporarily worshipping. Plans are in place to restore and rebuild a new church at the old worship location. St. James has complete twenty-four hour access now per day except Thursday. Five-Fold ministry continues to use the building on Thursdays. St. James is the only occupant of this space except Thursdays, and this seems to be having a better worship experience. The service has returned to 11:00 A.M. worship and attendance is increasing. Attendance has gone from thirty-five to fifty four per Sunday. The church is praying for the increase again.

Congregants have emotional ties to a building that is crumbling around them and difficult to maintain. Leaving the St. James historic building has been traumatic for some members and easy for others. Some members have a deep and strong connection to the history of the church building. One young adult expressed that she had dreamt of getting

married in the old structure. One widow stated that her husband's funeral had been held in the old building. She reports that her last memory of her deceased husband is him lying in the casket at the 310 Wood building. This is her last memory of him that she holds dear. She reports that every time she walked in the building her memory of him and the remembrance of the visualization brought her comfort.

Some baby boomers have been reluctant to travel to the various other worship facilities, while they still carry out other grounds responsibilities at the old worship site. They mow the lawn and keep the old building at 310 Wood Street looking neat. Some boomers have expressed that they will return to St. James but need to work through some things. No one is exactly sure what these things are!

Some of the Generation X members and their small children has left. They were a part of the dance ministry at St. James. This was a vibrant part of the church and this ministry has not revitalized yet.

The Church Conference voting body voted to return to the land located at 310 Wood while making plans to either renovate the old building or tear it down and build a new church building. The church needs three bids. At this point the church has received one bid for the purpose of rebuilding or renovating. Another contractor has taken a look at the church to make recommendations to the church. This contractor has not yet met with the Church Conference.

City Context

Flint made worldwide news when General Motors (GM) filed bankruptcy and closed its doors. The closure of GM impacted the city and churches membership. Many younger families left the city seeking a competitive living wage and employment stability. A once vibrant and thriving city is now moving toward decline. Large portions of St. James members are retirees of General Motors and dependent upon their GM pensions. Other younger members are in service or clerical jobs or trying to develop home businesses. Crime has increased in relation to the economy. Flint's civil services such as police and fire departments are downsizing making Flint unsafe. City services operate at bare minimum. Post office and schools are closing causing worker layoff. The streets and sanitation departments are downsizing causing garbage collection to work under private collections companies. The streets inside Flint are corroded and filled with potholes.

The CME Church operates three churches providing ministry, care and service in the city of Flint. They are St. James CME, Dozier CME and St. Peter CME Churches. In formal and informal gatherings these sister churches discuss how the cities conditions impact their respective churches. Church alliance groups unrelated to the CME Zion report similarly that economic downturn has severely affected their church membership and growth.

These downward spirals in the city of Flint have impacted church life. Membership does not increase and attendance is lower. Economic woes make it challenging for young adults and older persons depending upon pensions to financially support the church (For demographics see Appendix A).

Ministries

On the first Sunday in August 2009, I arrived at St. James and preached my first sermon. About thirty-five people were present in a four hundred-seat (400) sanctuary. The spirit of worship was dead. The officers, church and choir members arrived late for worship because previous pastors never started on time. There was a musician who played one Sunday a week and the music was too soft. The choirs sang lifelessly. There were three or four choirs with each choir having about four to five participants. Congregants sent notes up to me in the pulpit during the service with the expectation that they would be read.

The trustees arrived late to turn on the microphones and set up the worship space. These thirty-five people sat in this large sanctuary spaced apart from one another. Members did not know each other's names. The families did not join together. The kitchen committee could not agree on anything. The church was disorganized and did not resemble a community. The Sunday bulletins were printed and distributed a few minutes before Sunday worship.

Initially, the church had no direction. There was only one vibrant ministry, which was the Praise Dance Ministry. Its members held the church hostage, either knowingly or unknowingly, by dancing when they wanted to. They did not dance until every member was present. On a particular Sunday, when the Presiding Elder preached, the praise dance ministry held up the ministry of dance to wait for one of their members to show up. They had been placed strategically in the worship service. This made the service longer and more disjointed. The church boards and ministries were not functioning.

After assessing the needs, a few simple immediate changes were made. The choirs were combined; announcements were placed in the bulletin prior to Sunday, and the Praise Dance Ministry was asked to be more consistent. Worship started at 11:00 A.M. sharp and required that all officers be present and on time to set up. Over time, sermons on love, hope, working together and team building were preached. Preaching and teaching focused on what it meant to be a missional church. The people began receiving pastoral care and love and came to understand that they were worthy of Christ's love and were entitled to everything the kingdom offered. They were assured that the creator loved them and that Christ accepted them all. The congregation was given the assurance they would receive my very best. God used my gifts to sing, preach and love allowing the members to know that surely God was going to bless us and St. James is a church in transition striving to come back to its prominent title as the first church on the Mid Michigan CME District.

In spite of all of the aforementioned negative influences the persons that remain love their church and are willing to do what it takes to make sure that this church will survive and thrive. As of now they are a loving people who are working together to make sure that this church will go forward with 21st century ministry. In spite of the challenges of renovation of the church building, the people that have stayed are hopeful for a better and brighter day.

This writer believes that in this congregation girls and women are sitting here waiting for someone to speak to their deepest unmet needs. Because this writer knows they are here since statistics support the writer's understanding, women in this congregation and other congregations like it are waiting for healing. This writer has the

passion and permission from the Holy Spirit to address their needs. The writer is the one to take on this task because she too is part of the statistics and is a victor from the sin of abuse and domestic violence.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL

Theoretical Foundation

Wonderings

The church needs renewal. This writer (she) believes that Christians are seeking ways to find healing, hope and salvation and get deep unmet spiritual needs fulfilled in the church. This researcher also believes that leading church renewal will happen when an internal and external evangelistic outbreak happen concurrently. This project will examine one specific way to manipulate an internal and external outbreak. At the onset of this paper, the researcher wants to be very clear that the person of the Holy Spirit has the control and power over the success of human manipulation.

World church and denominational leaders, Christian newsletters and other periodicals report that denominational churches are in decline and are seeking ways to address twenty first century spiritual needs so that the church may remain relevant and evangelism will still continue. "Churches have moved from essential to non-essential in the lives of millions. More than two-thirds of young church going adults in America drop out of church between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two."[1] This researcher makes the claim that churches are in decline because they are taxed by financial burdens and fewer fruitful practices. The writer serves in the CME Church and agrees with this view of

[1]Thomas S. Rainer and Sam S. Rainer III, *Essential Church? Reclaiming a Generation of Dropouts.* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 2.

church decline. As a participant in the *Leading Church Renewal* cohort of the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio she shares the belief that post-modern churches need renewal to meet the needs of twenty-first century ministry. Issues related to church polity, doctrine, philosophy, growth, evangelism and becoming poised for twenty-first century ministry etc. must be addressed in order to facilitate renewal.

The writer hypothesizes that while church leadership is empowered to write polity, policy, upgrade evangelism, outreach programs, technological advances and implement advanced post-modern ways of growing churches; the church cannot legislate the hearts of people carrying out the aforementioned. She hypothesizes that renewal happens when Jesus Christ transforms individuals through the person of the Holy Spirit. Transformed hearts and minds bring about renewal and not written policies. Renewal impacts numerical, spiritual and financial growth in churches. How does renewal happen? How do churches reach the masses, reach men and women of every birth so that Jesus can draw all men and women to himself (Jn 8:28) so they may transform into renewed people. This project will address and evangelize a specialized group. When this groups needs are met; an evangelistic outbreak will happen and church renewal will occur. This group will have influence over many other people and groups. With God's help if one woman can be reached through preaching and become saved, she will reach others.

The writer lives with a particular understanding of womanpower. This understanding guides this dissertation because the researcher is an eternal optimist and hope filled. She believes the world can be saved. She believes that she can save the world if she allows, the Jesus in her to help just one woman get healed and be made whole. That

one woman can save her family. Once that woman's family is healed, it can save their church. That church can save a neighborhood. The neighborhood can save a community. The community can save a city or town. The city or town can save a state. The state can save a nation. One nation can save another nation and then save the world. This is evangelism at its best and this renewal will happen because the researcher dares to believe that helping one woman can save the world.

The writer makes an unscientific and subjective observation. In most any African American church denomination in the United States, more women attend and occupy the pews and seats than men. The researcher wonders why. She wonders if women attend church out of tradition, seek something useful to do, are searching for social networks or seeking to get deep unmet spiritual needs met. She wonders if perhaps some women hope that one day someone will look into their eyes and see the pain masked under their clothes and fashion; their false bravado and false meekness. The researcher wonders if these women hope and pray that someone will look underneath their presentation to the world and take a deeper look. They hope someone will finally realize that there is someone else sleeping underneath the skin they live in and are waiting for an awakening, not realizing they need renewal.

These women present themselves in different ways. Perhaps the brash authoritarian that repeatedly disrupts church business meetings or the tongue lasher repeatedly telling everyone where to get off; or the double-minded woman that cannot take a stand on anything; are not who these women really are? Perhaps the woman that gossips or the woman who cannot keep a secret, or keeps secrets all too well to the detriment of herself and the church community; are not really who they are? Perhaps the

quiet woman that goes along with everything never standing up for herself is not who she really is? Perhaps these varying types of women show up every Sunday morning or attend every special Sunday afternoon program. Perhaps they present themselves this way because they have been altered by a vicious evil attack and are changed from whom God intended them to be. They are sleep walking through their lives waiting for someone to wake them so their true authentic selves will emerge renewed. Why have the clergy and the church uncovered them yet?

The writer believes that some male clergy are deeply sympathetic, empathetic and equipped with clinical pastoral care skills to provide needed help. Others, and though they may try, miss the nuances of being a woman. The use of patriarchal language in preaching sermons does not always reach underneath women's pain and suffering. Sometimes unknowing usage of patriarchal language leaves women feeling unsatisfied and wondering about their salvation. Some sermons might unknowingly exclude African American women. Some male pastors fully aware of the power of their authority and use it to meet their own needs. Regardless of the male pastors intentions, women continue attending church hoping and praying to have a deep unmet spiritual need get addressed so they may become renewed.

Why the Need?

What is the deep unmet spiritual yearning to be addressed? "One out of every six American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime (14.8% completed rape; 2.8% attempted rape)."[2] Victimized women have been broken

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[2]National Institute of Justice & Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, (accessed January 2013) *Prevalence, Incidence and Consequences of Violence Against Women Survey,* 1998, https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/172837.pdf.

and need specialized healing and spiritual transformation. This writer feels strongly that prophetic and specialized preaching is an answer that speaks to abuse. When broken people hear a message that speaks to their needs, they will be able to experience "religion that provides recovery."[3] This writer operates from the vantage point that women that have experienced any type of abuse have also experienced some form of sexual abuse and have suffered in silence. It is easier to report domestic violence, which has been under the spotlight, than sexual abuse. Sexual abuse, although pervasive, is still is cloaked. This shame-based crime often goes unreported because the victims are ashamed to disclose.

Sexual abuse is a traumatic intrusion into spiritual development and human growth radically altering people from whom God intended them to be. The sinful intrusion creates victims rather than victors. Sexual abuse contributes to people believing they cannot be healed, fixed, realigned, and is beyond salvation. This is untrue.

> Christianity is a religion of salvation, which means that it is opposed to the perspective of fatalism (nothing can be saved) and pantheism (nothing needs to be saved). Christianity, this is to say, takes sin and evil in the world seriously but believes that the world is destined for redemption.[4]

Oppression and predatory behavior strip away vitality, courage and strength. Oppression and predatory behavior creates paralyses that prevent spiritual healthiness and wholeness and experience HAN. This discussion will start with HAN.

It might appear peculiar that the writer shapes this discussion with the Korean theology of HAN to shed light on the subject regarding hurting people practicing Christianity. According to Korean theology, HAN is "defined as a physical, mental and spiritual repercussion to a terrible injustice done to a person, eliciting a deep ache, a

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[3]Rudolph McKissick, United Theological Seminary, Chapel Preaching, 2012.

[4]Michael Kinnamon, Eden Theological Seminary, Class notes, 2005.

wrench of all the organs, an intense internalized or externalized rage, a vengeful obsession and the sense of helplessness and hopelessness."[5]

Anyone can experience HAN, therefore we start by saying that pain from sexual abuse or any abuse is not limited to any one group of people. To further clarify the subject, Elaine Heath uses the Faith Trust Institute's definition of abuse.

> Sexual violence refers to harmful behaviors that use sex or sexuality as a weapon to control, intimidate or violate others. Whether it is viewed clinically, legally, objectively or subjectively, violence is the common denominator. Sexual violence is about violence that misuses sex and sexuality to exert power over or exploit others. It encompasses rape, incest, assault, date rape, sexual exploitation, misconduct and abuse as well as inappropriate touching and harassing jokes and comments. The injuries may be psychological or physical and frequently are both.[6]

We will now examine African American people and their HAN. African Americans, known as an oral people, are moved to action as a result of hearing and listening. A three day revival is going to be developed for the purpose of speaking directly to Women's HAN. Specialized preaching will happen and this specialized preaching will become the salve, surgery and medicine for the sin-sick soul. One of the services will provide anointing with oil. The revival will help people come to know that theological understandings exist specifically for their needs and that God has not forgotten them. The hearers/participants will benefit from preaching and hearing transformative messages offering hope and ways to connect to God, thus transforming them from victim to victor. The writer believes that subsequent workshops, plays speaking directly to women's suffering, theater arts and music accompanying this specialized preaching will aid broken women's sufferings and move them from victim

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[5]Andrew Sung Park, United Theological Seminary Handout, 2012.

[6]Elaine A. Heath, *We Were the Least of These: Reading the Bible with Survivors of Sexual Abuse* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2011), 179.

thinking and behavior to victorious living. This revival will speak to the needs of all women but the scope of this project is primarily for African American women (AAW).

From Victim to Victor will provide follow-up seminars focusing on esteem building, recognizing human worth and value, understanding the need to say no, developing body boundaries and reliance upon the Holy Spirit for emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth. The combination of preaching and seminars will melt and loosen spiritual paralysis and impact emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth.

This revival's name is *From Victim to Victor*. Three sermons focusing primarily on women's abuse with undergirding theological foundation, biblical references and historical foundation will be made available to others and marketed as sermons providing religion for recovery.[7] This specialized preaching will assist women in moving toward victory. The transformative homiletics will equip voiceless, sexually abused women of all ages, educational and socioeconomic levels equipping them in finding their voice. Finding their voice positions them to be able to open up and say out of their mouths the secrets kept for so long. Finding their voice will move them into healing, wholeness and victory. People will become effective in their families, workplaces, schools, social gatherings and churches. Church renewal will take place as individuals become spiritually and physically healthier. Healthy individuals create a healthier world and will be able to lead church renewal. An evangelistic outbreak will happen with those already attending church as well. They will equip the AAW to begin the journey to Soterios. As a result of their renewal, an evangelistic outbreak happens in the church. People will become effective in their families, workplaces, schools, social gatherings and churches.

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[7]McKissick, *Chapel Preaching*.

The writer recognizes that African American men and other groups of people are victimized, debilitated and suffer as well. The writer in no means wishes to neither discriminate nor minimize others suffering and need for help. While the content of this project can reach and impact people from all racial and ethnic groups, the researcher identifies with African American women, as she is an African American survivor of sexual abuse and a member of the clergy. She currently serves as pastor of a 100% African American Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. She additionally has easier access for interface with AAW. The writer brings specialization to this subject that qualifies her to study it and offer psychosocial understandings. The researcher, also a trained Mental Health Professional of twenty years, has extensive training and received numerous certificates in behavioral healthcare. She has been trained in and taught and trained others on domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, foster care and adoption, sexual abuse, federal probation, substance abuse, counseling, special education, aids awareness, child abuse, and the Diagnostic Service Manual (DSM –IV). *She has designed and taught a specialized training entitled Bridging the Gap between the Church and Mental Wellness.* Her extensive experience in the field of Social Work and Behavioral Healthcare allow her to speak with authority in the body of this doctor of ministry project.

The sermons are to be marketed to others in ministry to help ministry colleagues know how to deal effectively with this subject.

Looking Deeper

The writer believes that spiritual battles, abhorrent and deviant psychosocial behaviors manifesting in African American women have a link to childhood sexual abuse. This researcher believes that abused women are unable to reach their full potential

when their issues are untreated and undressed. Sexual abuse is oppressive and deprives women from reaching their full potential. Abused children become victims and some become perpetrators when they receive no help. Girls and women suffer in silence because of race, gender, cultural norms as well as Christian misunderstandings. As a result of sexual abuse, African American Women respond negatively in relationship formation, child rearing, intimacy, school and work ethic and healthy sexuality. They tend to develop fewer stress related coping mechanisms. The writer plans to lead women to experiencing Soterios by the power of the person of the Holy Spirit.

The writer recognizes that in order for African American women to experience healing and taste Soterios in its fullest sense, they need assistance gathering the courage and power to make a first step, which will release them from victimization. The writer believes that victims can become saved not only as in "salvation from death and eternal damnation, but also freedom from oppression and injustice."[8] This researcher believes that brokenness and woundedness and the pain suffered from not receiving vindication are needed for African American women. The writer wants to demonstrate that when AAW are brought into a closer communion with God, they are able to connect with Jesus Christ's saving power through the person of the Holy Spirit.

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[8]Justo Gonzalez, *Essential Theological Terms* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2005), 163.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The Guiding Questions

In order to determine the effectiveness of the scope of this project, "The writer needs to ask three questions that would guide her in the discovery of the foundations with which to build a model for a Doctor of Ministry project. This chapter is devoted to the research and learnings of the researcher in her search for theological, biblical and historical foundations for her project."[1]

The writer plans to measure movement and improvements by selecting a target group using measuring instruments developed by the researcher and/or other established measuring instruments. The instruments will consist of interviews, self-report, questionnaires, pre and posttest and checklist, which mark improvement.

The first part is biblical foundation. In Christianity, the Bible's canonical books provide divine inspiration and revelation from God. The church relies on the Bible as its primary theological foundational teachings for understanding. AAW will understand that the Bible speaks to their particular suffering. Biblical foundation is needed to help AAW understand that the Bible recognizes that their specific abuse already has been identified and named in the Bible and is not a new phenomenon. Secretiveness is a tool perpetrators use to keep victims enslaved and victimized. Perhaps AAW will become equipped with

[1]Gary Eubanks, Doctor of Ministry Dissertation *United Theological Seminary*; Dayton, Ohio), 45.

the skills needed to release their secrets when they understand the Bible speaks to enslavement to sin, dysfunctional living and misguided understanding.

The third part is the historical foundation. In order to know where we are heading we must know about the past or we are doomed to repeat the past. Historical understanding helps to shape our thinking and problem solving. Without a historic foundation women might be led to believe sexual abuse is a 21st century phenomena. This writer will look at history and its treatment of women. This allows the writer to focus on the affects sexual abuse has had on African American women.

The third part is theological foundation. In Christian teaching women understand that fornication, adultery and homosexuality is sin. What happens when women are introduced to sex too early by a perpetrator? When is it too early to introduce sex into a girl or woman's life? Christian understanding of sexual relationships tells us sex is between a husband and wife. Yet the Old Testament relays the history and stories of men with many wives and concubines. "The difference between wife and concubine was less marked among the Hebrews than among us, owing absence of moral stigma."[2] However concubines held status in the household and had a place. Concubines were not entitled to everything a wife was entitled, but they belonged in the household. Where do the abused victims belong? How do post modern girls and women respond when cultural norms have changed and she is neither wife nor concubine? What happens to a woman's self-esteem and how does it impact her future? Has she sinned when someone else imposed their will upon her? Is she any less a woman? Has sexual abuse soiled her internal psychological makeup and corrupted her journey of embracing her own femininity? Is it permissible for girls and women to be treated as sexual objects for those whom wish to possess them?

[2]William Smith, *Smith's Bible Dictionary* (Boston, MA: Hendrickson Publishers Inc. 1999), 122.

Are girls and women expected to accept repeated sexual abuse as the norm? Do girls and women suffer in silence believing that no one would care even if they did speak out? Are they sinners? Does God still offer her grace?

African American women, victimized by childhood sexual abuse must deal with these questions regularly. Victims might not live the lives they want. Victims might not be able to connect the abuse to their inability to thrive now. This writer wants to assist women by helping them to identify and develop needed coping skills in dealing with these tough issues. This writer believes that another way women can find solutions to this problem and become whole is to be led to Soterios becoming whole and then experience Shalom. A full discussion will follow later in this paper. This researcher wants to provide relief by helping women open themselves up to receive direction from the person of the Holy Spirit so that God's plan of Soterios for healing and salvation may enter in.

Biblical Foundation

The canonical Bible is foundational for Christian understanding. The Old and New Testament writings impact Christian information and formation. Scriptures provide truths for reflection, edification, purification, sanctification and salvation. Some Christians embrace the Bible as the inerrant word of God while other Christians read the text with reader response. Then other Christians read the Bible using other supporting text with reasoning, tradition and experience. Through whatever lenses Christian's view the Bible; it is unarguable that the Bible provides foundational information, which in turn illuminates, challenges, amplifies, informs and transforms the reader.

The following text is intended to cast light on incest, sexual abuse and its devastating effects upon the victim. Subsequent scriptures were selected to illustrate

biblical references to this topic for theological understanding and evidentiary proof that sexual abuse and incest are not new and there is "nothing new under the sun" (Eccl 4:9).

Tamar and Amnon—2 Samuel 13: 10- 21

> Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the chamber, so that I may eat from your hand." So Tamar took the cakes she had made, and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her brother. But when she brought then near him to eat, he took hold of her, and said to her, "Come lie with me, my sister," She answered him, "No my brother, do not force me; for such a thing is not done in Israel. Now therefore, I beg you, to the king; for he will not withhold me from you." But he would not listen to her; and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her. Then Amnon was seized with a very great loathing for her. Amnon said to her, "Get out!" But she said to him, "No my brother, for this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other that you did to me." But he would not listen to her. He called the young man who served him and said, "Put this woman out of my presence, and bolt the door after her.
>
> Now she was wearing a long robe with sleeves; for this is how the virgin daughters of the king were clothed in earlier times. So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. But Tamar put ashes on her head, and tore the long robe that she was wearing; she put her hand on her head, and went away, crying aloud as she went.
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> Her brother Abasalom said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? Be quiet for now, my sister; he is your brother; do not take this to heart." Tamar remained a desolate woman, in her brother's Absalom's house.
>
> When King David heard of all these things, he became very angry, but he would not punish his son Amnon, because he loved him, for he was his firstborn. But Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad; for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had raped his Sister Tamar."

This is an account of incest and sexual abuse. This text looks at family dysfunction and how Amnon lusted after his sister. This text reveals how David's daughter, Tamar, was forced into sexual submission against her will by her half- brother Amnon, David's firstborn. Tamar and Absalom, David's third son, shared the same mother Maachah. Tamar is described as beautiful in this Old Testament text.

David, Amnon's father, also used sex to lure in Bathsheba. He lusted the way his father lusted after Bathsheba. "Unlike David with Bathsheba, however, Amnon is unable to simply send for and take Tamar; because as a young marriageable virgin, she is subject

to strict oversight. Hence he must use subterfuge to take her."[3] However this is Tamar's story. Tamar was shamed on many levels. Her father is unable to do the right thing by her because his emotions are tied to her perpetrator, his firstborn son. Her, full brother, becomes enraged and plots to avenge her honor so that he sins against the family by killing his brother.

Tamar easily enters her half-brother's chambers wearing her virgin's robe because she had no reason to think her brother, though half would think of her as anything except a sister. Amnon faked an illness to entrap Tamar in his bedroom. As any good and loving sister would do, Tamar innocently takes cakes to her older brother perhaps to cheer him up. Through her lens she was caring for her sick big brother. Instead Amnon wanted to fulfill his own wishes to conquer her using sex.

Tamar begged for him not to abuse her. Tamar did not want to be molested and begged Amnon not to take away her virginity. Though this type of marriage would have been frowned upon, she even begged that he would marry her first. Levitical law would have prohibited such a union (Lev 18:9) but even an unholy marriage would have been better than Amnon having sex with his sister for sport, fun and/or to fulfill his lusts.

Using his strength, power and position, he forced Tamar to lay with him and perform sexual acts. After he fulfilled his needs he immediately let her know that she disgusted him and treated her with unmistakable coldness. Her beauty of face, body, spirit and innocence became defiled. Amnon treated Tamar as if she were dirt, when in fact he shoveled his dirt upon her. Her older half- brother had no regard for Tamar's immediate hurt and shame. He did not care about the long-term and far reaching effects

[3]Frank H. Gorman, Jr., *Leviticus The Harper Collins Bible Commentary with the Society of Biblical Literature* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins Publishers Inc. 2000), 152.

this rape and victimization would have on her life. Perpetrators do not care about their victims. They only want to satisfy their need at that time.

> It is not unusual for persons instigated by violent and irregular passions to go from one extreme to another. In Amnon's case the sudden revulsion is easily accounted for; the atrocity of his conduct, with all the feelings of shame, remorse, and dread of exposure and punishment, now burst upon his mind, rendering the presence of Tamar intolerably painful to him.[4]

Her innocence and status as a virgin were stripped away. The hurt, pain and humiliation had begun. Who knows what hopes and dreams were tied to her virginity, her future husband and life?

> The phrase "Tamar lived with her brother Absalom's house, a desolate woman" indicates that, because of this tragic and wanton act, she is no longer desirable as a wife. So she leads a lonely, solitary life in the house of her kin.[5]

Tamar unwillingly sinned, through no fault of her own, and immediately took on a burden she did not cause or need. She was shamed and immediately treated herself feeling immediate physical and emotional pain from her brother's assault. She launched into victim behavior. Immediately she was changed from who she was planning to become into something different than perhaps what she envisioned for herself. Tamar became a desolate woman. Her entire life changed from this young beautiful hopeful woman to a desolate, wild and depressed woman. Her innocence and potential were stolen from her.

Tamar's paralysis started. She was unable to take action or move forward. She tore off her virgins robe and placed ashes on her head. Postmodern girls and women self-mutilate rather place ashes on their heads. Some take off their virgin robes launching into

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[4]R. Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, A.R. Fausset, D. Brown, & D. Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (2 Sa 13:15) (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

[5]Frank Johnson, *Student Genesis to Revelation Series Book 5* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 89.

promiscuity. She cried all the way home. Perhaps she cried for the act itself. Perhaps she cried for the loss of innocence. Perhaps she cried for having to fight off her brother that took her virginity. Perhaps she remembered his body on hers and the other sensory parts of this act. Perhaps she felt abandoned after he defiled her. These actions signaled her descent into this life of desolation. Spiritual paralysis was taking root in her life. She became a victim.

Like many 20th and 21st Century perpetrators, family members have difficulty responding appropriately to this heinous action. Perhaps Tamar might have felt better if her father would have punished Amnon or done something to acknowledge her pain so she could have felt vindicated. Tamar's brother Absalom avenges her later by committing another sin of murder a few years later. Tamar might have taken on the guilt of her brother avenging her. This could have added more layers of muck to her spirit and psyche`.

Phyllis Trible has analyzed this text and reflects on its relationship to another text. She looks at Proverbs 7:4-5, which is written for young men: Say to wisdom, "You are my sister and call insight your intimate friend that they may keep you from the loose woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words."

> In Proverbs, wisdom is personified as a woman who is to protect the young man from the dangers of bad women. The irony is that in the story of Tamar and Amnon, Tamar's word to Amnon is wise. She counsels him not to do the foolish thing. Just as the young man in Proverbs is counseled to call wisdom his sister, Amnon calls Tamar "my sister." His intimate friend, however, is Jonadab, whose insight is clever, but hardly wise. Amnon does not need protection from a "bad" woman. He needs protection from his own lust, and Tamar needs protections against it.[6]

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[6]Alice Ogden Bellis, *Helpmates Harlots Heroes: Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville, KY: Westminster /John Knox Press 1994), 152.

Trible concludes:

> Compassion for Tamar requires new vision. If sister wisdom can protect a young man from the loose woman, who will protect sister wisdom from the loose man, symbolized not by a foreigner but by her very own brother? Who will preserve sister wisdom from the adventurer, the rapist with his smooth words, lecherous eyes, and grasping hands? In answering the question, Israel is found wanting—and so are we."[7]

This biblical portrait of Tamar demonstrates the countless number of women that have been sexually abused by words and deeds. The subterfuge of luring Tamar into Amnon's living quarters was despicable. Innocent girls are prey for older and seasoned persons knowing how to manipulate them. Women of all races and ethnic groups have been victimized. There are dangers not only from strangers and people we date but also from relatives. "Tamar is not an ancient anomaly. She is all around us. If awareness can lead to change, let us remember Tamar's story and resolve that sexual abuse can and will stop."[8]

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything has passed away, everything has become new (2 Cor 5:17). The Pauline scripture says that all things become new. But this writer argues with Paul's' writing, "All things become new." How can violated, victimized and spiritually and emotionally depleted women become new? This scripture seems to suggest that all one has to do is declare all things new and ignore sin the effects of sin and the devastation surrounding the old things. Sin and its effects must be acknowledged. We must grapple with how bad things really are. This writer argues that the newness Paul writes about is often unrealized and not immediately readily attainable. Does sin have the last word? And if the New Testament text about all things

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[7]Ibid., 152.

[8]Ibid., 153.

having been made new is not true as a description of reality as we know it, how else might we understand it? Is this a veiled promise?

The predators` need for power, control, and domination are tied to predatory need to violate girls and women and predators commit heinous sins over and against women. Sin was thrust upon them. A vicious cycle starts as girls and women become victims thus causing them to engage in other symptoms of sinful behavior. The aftermath of this sin keeps women living in shame thus behaving shamefully sinful impacting their present and future. Paul says that the Corinthians must become new; however the becoming is not that easy for postmodern women either.

The writer suggests that until perpetrators have a deep desire for healing and acknowledge their role in this sinful abhorrent behavior, girls will continue to be sexually abused damaged and victimized. The writer suggests that one line of defense for girls and women about predatory behavior is Christian education. The writer submits that until churches uses its loud and collective voice about the depth of this sin, this action will continue to imprison girls and women. A deadening silence happens and no one is going to become new and old things will remain the same if the church, especially the African American church does not speak up using its collective voice.

This writer is prayerful that sexual abuse will stop. She is prayerful that the post-modern Tamar's of the world, particularly African American women, will one day be free from sexual abuse. She is prayerful that one-day beauty will not create subterfuge or cost women their innocence. She is prayerful that perpetrators will move toward a holy communion with God through the power of Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit. She is

prayerful that predators will become more introspective and seek salvation. She is hopeful that predator's sinful behavior will pass away when they accept Christ.

> Therefore—connected with the words in 2 Corinthians 5:16, "We know Christ no more after the flesh." As Christ has entered on His new heavenly life by His resurrection and ascension, so all who are "in Christ" (that is, united to Him by faith as the branch is in the vine) are new creatures (Ro 6:9–11). "New" in the *Greek* implies a new nature quite different from anything previously existing, not merely *recent,* which is expressed by a different *Greek* word (Ga 6:15).[9]

Becoming New Creatures through Soterios

Soterios means healing in the fullest sense. The researcher's belief is that reaching Soterios is the only thing that will cause broken women to become whole and renewed.

> Soterios is concerned with life in its wholeness and human flourishing in particular. Different religions, contexts, cultures and even the same religion in different context have different understandings of what salvation means. Using triggers from their own contexts on what it means to be well and whole they describe what it means to be healthy and how one attains that state. In the process they reveal a great deal about how they understand themselves and the world both as it is and how it ought to be. They also tell you a great deal about whom they understand God to be.[10]

Sin, human nature and soteriology/salvation are at the heart of sexual abuse. We are both sinners and saints at the same time. We are damaged and perverted but healed and renewed. How these polarized statements come together and are expressed in the world have a direct correlation to women getting healed and being saved. We have to be stripped down and renewed to be saved. In order to move from victim to victory, we must replace the old with the new and the good within has to be reconstituted and remodeled.

Reconstitution and remodeling do not happen in a vacuum and does not happen alone. For example over the counter medications do not work when an illness persists. It

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[9]R. Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, A. R.Fausset, D. Brown, & D. Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (2 Co 5:17) (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

[10]Damanyanthi Niles, Notes from class, Eden Seminary, Soterios Instructor, 2005.

needs stronger medication and expert treatment. The same is true with sexual abuse. When spiritual and emotional injuries happen as a result of sexual abuse telling people to get over it does not work. Sexually abused girls and women need spiritual and psychosocial treatment to assist the healing process.

Healing comes from accepting Christ and receiving the indwelling of the person of the Holy Spirit. Healing begins when women become disconnected from evil and connected to good.

> No one was more able to reflect on that transformation than Paul who switched from a persecutor of Christ to a proclaimer of Christ (Acts 9:5, 20-22). He was in Christ (a phrase Paul used repeatedly in his epistles to speak of a believer's spiritual relationship to Christ) because he believed the message of the gospel and was identified by faith with Christ (2 Cor 5:14-15; cf. Rom 6:3-4; Gal 2:20; 6:14). To be in Christ is to be a new creation (cf. Gal 6:15). This new creation is brought about by the Holy Spirit, the Agent of regeneration (Ti 3:5) and the Giver of divine birth (Jn 3:3, 6-8). God's new creative work, begun in each one who believes in Christ, will one day be consummated on a universal scale (Rev 21:4-5). The old life of slavery to self and sin has gone (2 Cor 5:16; cf. Rom 6:6-14; Eph 4:22; Col 3:9). The *new* life of devotion to Christ means that one has new attitudes and actions (cf. 2 Cor 5:14-15; Rom 6:4; Eph 4:23-5:2).[12]

But this is easier said than done. Abused women tolerance level for depravity and sinfulness are higher because their threshold for knowing how to operate in Christlike behavior. Esteem is fragile. African American Women are more fragile. African women are more challenged in reaching wholeness than their counterparts.

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[11]J. F. Walvoord, , R. B. Zuck, & Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (2 Co 5:17) (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983).

Historical Foundations

This writer believes that women will appreciate the revival when the history of this sin is taught. Abuse is not a new phenomenon and has been recorded throughout the Bible. In order to connect to the future and live in the present victims need a historical understanding of the past so their "souls may be quieted."[13]

> W. Paul Jones stated, "Deep within our souls, actually as proof that we have a soul, is a profound something that will not be quieted. Experienced negatively, this something seems to be emptiness, an ache, anguish, incompleteness accompanied by an innate cry for it to go away. Experienced positively, it is a yearning, a craving, a desire a hope.[14]

The African American Church does not seem to provide the needed help or place emphasis of these needs for women in pain, experiencing HAN or suffering from the brokenness of sexual abuse. These women's needs go unmet in the church because there is no spiritual guidance. A perpetual cycle continues.

> Another roadblock is that culturally African American women have a problem with self-care forgetting or ignoring their own wounds. Grandmothers and mothers model this behavior for their daughters and call it strength and endurance. Unlike the men, the women do not say things like, "Get over it! Or "Let it go!" These statements encourage the person to let go of whatever it is that is bothering them. Instead women tell their sisters and daughters, "Don't let it get to you" or "Keep it inside!" Behind these words is the truth that the hurt will remain inside until it eats at the insides of the woman like cancer or finds other ways to emerge. The truth is that for generations these women have taken their hurt and shame and showed it somewhere in the back of their hearts and tried to move on. This hurt is so deeply held in many African American women that They will ever be able to retrieve it and heal it without help.[15]

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[13]W. Paul Jones, *The Art of Spiritual Direction: Giving and Receiving Spiritual Guidance* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2002), 1.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Gloria Darlene Henderson, *A Woman's Healing Journey: Spiritual Direction for African American Women Who Have Experienced a Crisis* (D.Min. Project, United Theological Seminary, 2007), 90.

"In the third and fourth centuries many Christian men and women chose to go into the deserts of Egypt and Syria to pray, contemplate and devote themselves to study."[16] The monastic movement began with others wishing to grow spiritually and more deeply. They would locate this secluded group of monks and desire to have their spiritual formation mimic the monks. Those monks practicing this devout practice learned that "true intimacy with God results in a responsibility to help others find God as well."[17]

> This monastic spiritual direction movement was also important because a large number of early monks were women. It is even speculated that women may have initiated the monastic movement. The widows and orphans that were supported by the church often took an early vow of celibacy and immersed themselves in the contemplative life. Sheldrake confirmed that, "By the fourth century virgins were concentrated in Italy, Constantinople and Alexandria and were well educated and engaged in prayer and fasting, sometimes providing ministry. Some offered spiritual counseling and studied with other virgins.
>
> The spiritual formation practices of the early monastic movement were entered on a life of extreme ascetism and a driving search for solitude. Early records of spiritual formation practices included various acts of piety or punishment. Over the years these practices were replaced by discipline and devotion to prayer, meditation and scripture reading."[18]

The revival is connected back to the monastic movement in that women will have intensive days of discipline, devotion, prayer, sermons, meditation and reshaping of spiritual formation allowing room for catharsis to happen and the state of Soterios to enter. This style of learnings continued into the "middle ages when emphasis was placed on scholarship."[19] Spiritual formation and guidance continued in this manner however during the middle ages and formal methodology surfaced in the "middle of the 14th

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[16]Henderson, *A Woman's Healing Journey*, 83.

[17]Ibid., 83.

[18]Ibid., 83, 84.

[19]Ibid., 84.

century."[20] Spirituality and religious understandings became more personal during this time. People relied upon their connection to their understandings. "Spirituality did not only become separate from theology during this period, it became separate from the secular."[21]

> Women made notable contributions to the church and field of spiritual direction this time. The work of Julia of Norwich and Teresa of Avila stand out for their particular contributions to the field of spiritual formation of women. July of Norwich expanded the field of spiritual direction to include more feminine concepts and images of God and God's way of relating to humanity.[22]

Women were included in the spiritual awakening during this part of history. What women brought to this awakening was a relational, experiential and humane way of understanding spiritual matters. "The traditional spiritual programs were very goal driven and hierarchal. Stairs and ladders often symbolized them. Women brought other values to spiritual direction such as emotional and relational and nurturing themes that have become the mark of spiritual formation in the twenty-first century."[23]

Theological Foundation

Womanist and Liberation Theology
Why Just African American Women?

Hearing scripture and praying is the conduit for connecting AAW to the deep healing that is needed and inducing catharsis. Though deeply effective these powerful means of connecting with God cannot penetrate the pain and get underneath the suffering unless a deep connection to Christ happens. Connecting to Christ does not seem doable or

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[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., 85.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid.

matter to a violated woman. How can she love the Lord when she cannot even love herself? What does the church or things of the church offer? African American women have an even deeper cross to bear of being woman and black.

According to Gloria Darlene Henderson, "Womanist theologians believe the experiences of African American women are different enough from their white feminist's theologians to warrant a different kind of dialogue."[24] Black women's struggle is different from her white counterparts because the cultural and racial struggles are different. Feminism elevated white women out of some of their oppression in their fight for equality. Womanism, the African American theological understandings and constructs, have different spins. "Women must… "Create new realities in order to resist dehumanization."[25]

It disturbs the writer to have the need to write about differences between African American women and other women. The United States constitution talks about equality and inclusiveness, justice and freedom for all; however media and scholarly literature report that we are continuing in the striving for racial unity and equality. This African American woman pastor/researcher personally embraces this Galatians 3:28. "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus". Galatians 3:28; yet looking at the world particularly the United States, we have not reached that status yet. This is a diverse world and because the world continues to operate in exclusion and has not yet embraced this scripture; a discussion must happen to assure that African American's women needs are included.

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[24]Ibid., 76.

[25]Mitchum, 109.

From this writer's lens, racism and bias still exist as late as 2012. To illustrate the level of racism that continues in 2012 the researcher points to an incident involving First Lady Michele Obama. Republican Congressman Jim Sensenbrenna verbalized with impunity that First Lady Obama's large posterior was a reason to disqualify her from leading in her campaign against childhood obesity because her buttocks was obese. Ample posteriors in African American women are genetic so I conclude this was either an uninformed statement or racial attack.

"Focusing on African American women's pain and suffering points toward Womanist considerations of salvation and Black women's meanings and give ground for resistance, and are intended for the use of the community."[26] Black women experience racism daily. It is not pronounced or in your face as it was before the end of Jim Crow, but it exists daily and AAW understand the ugly head of covert racism. Even, however, in the midst of all the struggles including racism, God is ever present in Black women's lives.

African American girls and women seek to understand the lack of marriageable African American men and those that do marry often marry outside the race or publicly declare other ethnic groups as desirable as or more marriageable than they. Television, Internet and magazines significantly influence culture. These phenomena influence AAW girls and women causing them to feel devalued. If a woman has been sexually abused her already shattered view of herself becomes even more shattered. Subtle signs are given.

This writer has witnessed a great shift in images of beauty in the United States in the African American community. During the 1950' up till the 1970's the standard of beauty for AAW was polarized. Living through this time span, this researcher knows that

[26]Ibid., 108.

AAW who were considered beautiful were either closer to their white counterparts in appearance or were more honey toned, shapely and with full hips. In the African American community women could weigh as much as two hundred pounds, depending on height and bone structure and be considered healthy or foxy. Regardless of the amount of melanin in their skin; AAW were described as bronze beauties, stallions, Ebony delights and other monikers. These women were desired and sought after as wives and mothers. Since the 1970's there has been a major shift.

AAW spends thousands of dollars to purchase long hair in the name of beauty. AAW strive to attain lithe, slender, skinny bodies attempting to mimic white female counterparts. While this writer recognizes that excess weight creates major health issues and agrees that AAW has more health related issues she also understands that beauty and self-esteem is tied to weight and body image.

A Black male, a contemporary and friend of the writer, Moody [redacted] (personal conversation, 1978), shared that he was an African American man who always cherished the beauty of AAW from the time period of 1950's through 1970's. His thoughts about beauty began to shift. He confided, "When you are barraged with constant images of thin alabaster white women with red lipstick, long lashes with long flowing hair, everywhere in the media it causes you to look differently at them and your desire increases." AAW internalize these subtle yet poignant messages regarding beauty, worth and value. Abused women, already experiencing body image and self-worth issues, feel even more devalued.

This writer observes that AAW younger girls and young adults under the influence of television and internet media live in a new era of hip-hop artists speaking misogynistic uttering's into the airwaves. This is an example from LiL Wayne.

You know me girl. I'm a cash money millionaire look at my Rolie (Rolex) girl
Drop to your knees top ya hair, ah ah slow me girl
Now hit it strong, won't be long, now catch it slowly girl. No he didn't say that, yes I did girl don't use rubbers, and I don't plan no kids girl
"I don't want your number, I want your trouble, in ya skins girl
Then after that, you can get it how you live girl
That's on the real girl, I'm a pimp girl
Get it twisted, I'll slam you like Shawn Kemp girl
I know my neck get it hot like a lighter girl
I just slap you a couple of times, never fight it girl
That's cause I likes it girl
And let me tell you somethin girl, I am a player girl
So don't you try to play me cause I never save a girl
Do me a favor girl, and wet the spot girl
And after you back it up, drop it like its hot girl[27]

Uninformed girls buy into this and accept the role of subservience and being less than that has been assigned to them. Not all hip-hop artists use the spoken word this way, but much of this young culture does. Modesty does not apply. Music pop celebrities Beyonce and Rhianna flood the airwaves and Internet. Young girls view of these hip hop artists' scantily clothed bodies gyrating around in the name of entertainment. Young girls see these celebrities and mimic their style of dress and behavior. Rhianna received media attention from her boyfriend Chris Brown after suffering physical abuse from him yet she seeks to go back to that relationship. Her behavior makes it more palatable for other girls to withstand domestic violence and abuse. Young sexually abused onlookers embrace show business hype and use it to validate promiscuity. They lack understanding that Beyonce and Rhianna's show business and market value hinge upon these images. Perhaps in private, neither of these, neither Beyonce nor Rhianna are what they portray. However, already hurting girls are further confused and damaged.

[27]Terius Gray, Byron O. Thomas, Dwayne Carter, Kedrick Cordell Moore, writers (Santa Monica, CA: Money Mack Music, Fresh Is The Word).

When an AAW has been sexually abused her spirit is altered. The Mental Health community names this as a dissociative disorder. This altered state impacts her self-physical assessment. To further illustrate, a peer of this writer, Marin [redacted] (personal conversation in 2005) shared that as a younger woman she assessed her feminity and value. Her self-assessment told her she was not as beautiful or as smart as some women. She was not as tall, or had long hair, but what she did have was large hips, large rounded posterior and big eyes. She dressed in tight fitting hot pants of the time and excessively dressed up her eyes up in order to compete and get noticed. These two illustrations disappoint the researcher because they illustrate that girls and women alter themselves. The need for male attention and approval helps to set up abused women to continue in unhealthy situations. Their relationships might be with former or current perpetrators.

Perhaps it might seem as if the writer is overly attentive to physicality but she recognizes a woman's physical appeal adds to her value. And AA women's esteem becomes rooted in the understanding that she what she possesses has little or no worth. Abused AAW live with this pain while trying to operate and live in this racist environment. The writer does not agree with these norms but understands them.

To continue clarifying this writer's hypothesis that African American women must approach finding Soterios differently than her counterpart, we will engage in God talk comparing Patricia Hill Collins, a sociologist and Womanist, and Deloris Williams. Engaging their discussion of Hagar the Egyptian surrogate for Sarah and Abraham will further illustrate the need to focus on the needs of African American women. This discussion serves to illuminate the understanding AAW need for special attention related to their sexual abuse.

The synopsis of Patricia Hill Collins is that in the Bible we find encounters or gestures of women. We do not find many words with the encounters. We must develop exegetical experience of words of Jesus to his deeds to be a proclaimer of the gestures. For example, "The woman with the issue of blood" (Mk 5: 24-34), we see a woman with no name that makes her way to Jesus to seek healing because she has been sick for twelve long years. She has an encounter with Jesus but speaks no words that are recorded. The writer of Mark tells us that this woman does sit down to speak with Jesus after she touched the hem of his cloak but the writer does not let us in on the conversation between the two.

Womanist and feminist theology can both be about salvation. The communication between this woman and Jesus is profoundly important but the conversation is not shared with the reader and therefore we must draw our own interpretations of the conversation.

Hill Collins states that there are matrixes of opposition. Her matrix looks like this:

Matrixes of Opposition

- Outsider within
- Unmasking masculine privilege i.e. (Peeling back the veil of male normativity)
- Loss of innocence about this country and belief system

Hill Collins goes on to say that:

> Black women are ignorant of major world issues. She goes on to say that, "But another important factor concerns U.S. Black women's relationships with the two groups most closely aligned with African-American women's interest. Via their control over U.S. feminism and Black intellectual discourse, respectively, White American women and Black American men constitute two groups with which and through which African-American women construct U.S. Black feminism. Both groups express may be well meaning, and in fact may express deep-seated concern for Black women's issues. But both groups find it difficult to get out of the way and

encourage a fully articulated, Black feminist agenda where Back women are in charge[28]

Delores S. Williams states that Hagar's story is about survival and not about Exodus or a race of people. She reads the Bible from Black women's epistemology and brings the experience of Black women alive. Williams discusses motherhood in this reality.

Abraham holds the power in this relationship. We look at surrogacy and see that it is another look at motherhood and if we look at Abraham and Sarah with a post-modern lens, we might think they are dysfunctional, yet this was a custom of their time. Hagar had no choices. Hagar was at the whim and wants of Sarah and then Abraham. Williams enter a discussion of liberation theologians and similarly to Hill-Collins; support that male liberation theologians have somewhat missed something. Williams says,

> The critique of atonement views by Womanist theology invites black liberation theologians to begin serious conversations with black females about the black Christians' understanding of atonement in the light of African American women's experience of oppression. Perhaps such a conversation can begin with the incarnation and the cross. By removing their sexist lens, black theologians can see that though incarnation is traditionally associated with the self-disclosure of God in Jesus Christ, incarnation also involves God's self-disclosure in a woman: Mary[29]

We can liken Hagar's life to a heteronormative plot. Hagar is co-opted into the lives of Sarah and Abraham. Hagar is property whose job is to produce, as any underling is expected to produce, whether in the work or social setting.

These two writers help depict that African American women have the need for a special look at how to encounter God and rise above their pain to become victorious.

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[28]Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York, NY: Routledge Press), 234.

[29]Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 168.

Bishop Vashti McKenzie of the AME church warns women seeking to work in ministry that they will succeed and advance but a struggle will accompany the elevation.

This writer makes a subjective and sweeping generalization. AAW are strong and resilient however this is not true for all AAW. AAW have been socialized to be strong as a survival mechanism. Racism, gender and class issues have caused AAW to adapt and live resiliently under some of the most difficult and even monstrous circumstances. AAW have survived childhood sexual abuse but not without lingering and residual effects.

Some abused AAW become sexually promiscuous, developing bold personalities. Some abused AAW display combative behavior. The combative and brash women may be the disruptive women in church business meetings. They might be the women that must always dictate or always have things their way. There are others that shrink away become invisible to the naked eye and have no voice.

In order for AAW to be freed from the stronghold and paralysis brought on by sexual abuse, AAW women need saving by a savior. If AAW could have saved themselves they would have. If AAW sexually abused women could have stepped out of the chasm of the private desolation and secrets in which they live, they would have. God will prevail and the person of the Holy Spirit will relieve women and elevate them to who God intended them to be but a struggle follows.

God's Intention for African American Women as Old Things Pass Away

Where is God in Black women's lives? AAW recognize their connection with God. AAW women feel God with emotion and meaning. God is not a distant God for

AAW but a *life partner*[30] who is there during times of sorrow, pain, healing, joy and hope for tomorrow.

The most intellectual and learned African American women are deeply rooted in folkways of connecting to God. AAW prays and meditates and do not always attend an organized church. AAW generally are highly spiritual whether they attend church or not. AAW believe that God is able and that God can be their help in time of trouble. This writer believes that she and all African American women are made in God's image.

What happens to the woman whose image is distorted by sexual abuse? Is God still there? AAW understand that God is still present intellectually but perhaps not spiritually or emotionally as they try to push past their pain. AAW are confused and perhaps think that none of God's grace is for them. This is a prime example of women needing to have the good within reconstituted and remodeled. These women become the primary targets for this revival.

Their souls are tarnished in sin. Their image is distorted after the abuse because they are confused about how God feels about them. They reason that since God is good and because they are no longer pure no longer resembling God then perhaps God is no longer good either because after all they are made in God's image. Goodness vanished during and after the abuse. Abused women live in a series of distortions. The distortions are:

1. I am technically not a virgin therefore I do not bring virginity to my marriage bed.

2. I am molested therefore I am less than.

[30]Ibid., 49.

3. I am unable to compete with other women in the area of job market, family and social settings because I am marked and I believe that people can look at me and see my sin that sits in the open like a scarlet letter upon my chest.

4. I am not sure how I became a sinner but I know that I am and I am this imposed sin.

Healing for AAW lies in the understanding of who they are and who God made them to be. When AAW develops a trichotomous understanding of human nature they can take a leap toward Soterios and healing.

Trichotomism says that human beings are of body, soul and spirit. We are not one without the other. We are not just bodies only. We are not only our hips and lips and eyes. We are not only intellect. We are not just minds with ability to serve God. We are all of these things. To be fully human and whole is to have the body, mind and soul connected to one another and God.

Daniel L. Migliore tells us that we simply do "not have bodies; we also are our bodies."[31] We express ourselves and communicate with others through our embodied actions. Human flourishing cannot be separated from the satisfaction of bodily needs." [32] Migliore's point that we are bodies is implicit of containing the spirit and the soul. To say that we are bodies' means that we (the soul and spirit) are interconnected, making us fully human. We are reconstituted and become our authentic true selves when we reconnect our bodies back to our minds, soul and spirit. We are fully human when these things are reconnected, interconnected and operating in full partnership with one another. It takes something otherworldly to put African American women back together again.

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[31]Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 143.

[32]Ibid.

In order to survive the abuse and live with the aftermath, AAW develop unhealthy coping mechanisms. During the act, abused women disconnected from themselves and God. She pushed past her pain and disconnected her soul, sprit and mind in order to survive. The split saved her from ending up in a mental health hospital, prison, shelter or some other form of dependent care.

During the rape she departs from the understanding of Trichotomism. Being fully human becomes almost impossible. She lives distortedly and operates in survival mode like Tamar. As the perpetrator steals a woman's ability to know wholeness, she struggles a lifetime trying to reconstitute. Abused women hunger and thirst for Soterios hungering to allow old things to pass away. These women long and thirsts for a God to change them. They seek to become new praying that this old thing of sexual abuse will not hold them captive anymore. They seek Shalom. They come to church seeking help and change.

> In Psalm 42 the writer used thirst as a metaphor to express a deep longing for the living presence of god in his life as he says, "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God: (Ps 42:2, NRSV). The writer in Psalm 63 also used thirsts to express his need for God and dryness to express the emptiness of a life without God, "O thou art my God, I seek thee, my soul thirsts for three; my flesh faints for thee, as in dry and where land where no water" (Ps 63:1, NRSV). In this text the psalmist expressed an intense longing for God, which can only be quenched by God. Both of these passages illustrate the natural desire for God that motivates seekers to initiate a spiritual direction relationship. The two passages also show that the seeker's need for God is as essential to their spiritual well being as food and water is for their psychological survival.[33]

She thinks distortedly and a Trichotomous understanding is compromised. She thinks, "You have taken my body but you cannot have my mind or my heart." Women survive the abuse but they are not whole if only one or two parts of them are functional? When a child is sexually abused she starts life disconnected.

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[33]Henderson, 70.

How can an abused woman really be whole? In order to be fully human, we need spirit, soul and body joined together. And that is out of line with God. It takes years to bring all three back together again to be whole and healthy.

This is a tension with God's intention for us as human beings. Sexual abuse interrupts God intention. It creates issues surrounding body, esteem, ability, capability, normalcy, and worthiness. She might be beautiful but sees herself as damaged goods and ugly. For example AAW typically compulsively overeat to protect themselves from future unwanted attacks using food as a sedative. This is different from her white counterpart who more generally suffers from anorexia. Victims become unaware of body image because the body has taken over and has become its own entity. The victim sees the body as a thing rather than a container for the spirit; therefore the body needs no care or attention. The body is a thing the abuser controlled and possessed therefore the body no longer belongs to or matters to the victim. This type of altered thinking allows food to soothe the pain and stress. The victim does not easily recognize the connection. While the spirit and soul ache to get eating under control, it is almost impossible because the body is now its own entity. Often AAW become the objects of ridicule as others look past the quality of the person and see only body-swollen body mass and fat, which is a symptom of sexual abuse.

Abused AAW might be godly and caring possessing virtuous characteristics but this writer knows first hand the struggle of how perception interferes and stagnates the victim's growth and development. When the body, soul and spirit, are in disagreement, authenticity and Soterios are not easily within one's reach. AAW contend with abuse and

try to muddle through and connect back to God. They try to collect themselves, repair their brokenness and become whole.

When victims recognize that it is God's plan for the mind, body and spirit intertwined and connect to God, they can be saved. Saving knowledge, a knowledge that bears decisively on the meaning, wholeness, and fulfillment of our life in relationship to God and others"[34] is when AAW enter into the realm of Soterios. When abused AAW recognize that God's plan for humanity is wholeness; that we are our bodies and our embodied actions are a sum total of who we are then perhaps old things will be able to pass away This writer argues that the declared newness takes deep work and prayer and specialized Christian revivals, seminars and workshops to help girls and women realize that sin does not have the last word.

Understanding Sin and Atonement

"According to its use in scripture, the heart is a metaphor for a person's decision-making apparatus. Satan, who personifies evil in Luke's narrative world, enters the heart to distort a person's capacity to make sound decisions about God."[35] Evil interferes with God's plan for who AAW were intended to be by the introduction of early sexual abuse. However, the festering pain and suffering is able to recover and receive healing when sin is examined and understood. AAW are unable to live sin free because their heart has been damaged. Long standing suffering and old wounds need time to heal after the veil of secrecy has been uncovered! Sin grips their thinking and behavior. The "cosmic struggle

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[34]Ibid., 23.

[35]Anthony B. Robinson and Robert W. Wall, *Called to Be Church The Book of Acts for a New Day* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 77.

between Satan and the Spirit over control of the signal to attract the perpetrator heart created a split."[36] The split is the dissolution of the trichotomism.

Before getting into relationship with Christ, AAW formerly believed they were unworthy of God's grace. AAW girls really did not know how God felt about them after the abuse. They wondered if they were still eligible to be recipients of God's grace. They heard sermons telling them of God's omnipotence and restorative power. They reasoned that if God is omnipotent then God saw their complicity and participation during the acts of molestation and subsequent encounters that played out during their lives.

Abused AAW privately chastised and convinced themselves and begin to accept that they were complicit during the molestation because they did not fight back. They reasoned that they were sinners because they thought of themselves as unwilling participants but participants nonetheless. They reasoned that it was not completely the perpetrators' fault because they must have done something or possess some internal evil or invited the evil perpetrator in some type of way.

African American women hunger for any type of male attention whether good or bad and use the learned sexual behavior to get it. A disproportionate number of AAW also shun men after abuse. A disproportionate number of African American homes do not have fathers or positive male images and healthy male relationships are foreign. Using sexuality to get male attention is not uncommon. The symptoms of sexual abuse have now caused AAW to sin through promiscuousness and fornication. They have blamed themselves and feel ashamed of the behavior they cannot seem to control. Abused women have been unable to speak the word no to unwanted male attention so they have caved-in as a method of peacemaking. Their decision-making apparatus has been distorted and

[36]Ibid.

they do not really know that God offers grace and new and tender mercies every morning, great is your faithfulness. Lamentations 3:23 giving them a chance to start over daily. God never fails and provides help in the time of trouble (Ps 46:1). They do not recognize they were sinned against and do not have to own this act or be ashamed.

AAW have been shocked with finitude and limitations, sin and suffering. AAW have had to survive racism, gender inequality and male domination. AAW have suffered brokenness from corporate racism and male ministers misunderstanding their needs. There is clergy abuse and some male clergy continue to damage women with their mishandling of power. AAW need to hear and know that though evil was imposed upon this imposed sin they owned was not their fault and they are forgiven.

Awaken Victoriously
The Holy Spirit Wins

There is a solution. Sin does not have to win. AAW in Christ can actually become new creations. There is atonement for abused women. Women can move from victim to victors. The solution is pneumatology. Getting into a new relationship with Christ and allowing the person of the Holy Spirit to take over makes these women victorious over sin. Women can take back their power become their authentic selves and not live in shame. Women experience grace and love and begin to renew. The Holy Spirit allows us to forgive and be forgiven.

This writer submits that victims can become victorious when they understand they are not sentenced to a lifetime of pain and suffering. There is a biblical support for change and transformation. There is opportunity to shed past suffering and move into the realm of Soterios because the possibilities and answers exist in scriptures.

There is hope and help in the Bible. We find that this subject is not dismissed in the Bible. This is good news. In 1 Corinthians 5: 1-9, Paul addresses and informs the Corinthian church that sexual immorality defiles the church and that it must be judged. This text indicates that the church recognizes sexual immorality exists and agrees that it should not continue. In this text someone reports to Paul that a church member is living with his father's wife. Paul judges this as immoral. While Paul specifically addresses this immoral act, the writer submits that all sexual immorality is included under this umbrella. She places sexual abuse and incest under this umbrella. Paul also informs the Corinthian church that they are to be judged for sexually immorality. Paul admonishes this church and goes so far as to ask Christians not to associate with those in the church who are sexually immoral. This is wonderful news for victims. Sexual immorality is addressed and is not to be tolerated. This gives victims permission to disconnect from their perpetrators emotionally.

Paul goes on further to let us know that healing and transformation can take place. Paul teaches the Corinthian church that he was saved by Christ. Paul admits to the Corinthian's that there was a time when all he knew of Christ was what other men said about Christ. Paul admitted that after his conversion he became a changed and transformed man. "Since the day he was saved, Paul could no longer think of Christ as just another man."[37]

Paul's conversion made him no longer see Christ carnally. Paul understood that when a person connects with Christ as the Lord who arose from the tomb; that person becomes a new creation. Paul recognized that a decisive break happens when one connects to Christ. Everything, which has kept another in desolation and sin no longer

[37]*The Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 1515.

has such, a stronghold when Christ enters. The writer submits that when girls and women connect to Christ they are positioned to become renewed and free of victim behavior.

Bound women that have been enslaved to the sin, bondage and the weight of victimization can really get free. In Paul's letter to the Corinthians there is hope for taking off the old and putting on the new. Twenty-first century women do not have to symbolically take off their virgin robes. They can wear them as long as they wish to. Women do not have to become desolate and burdened with the spiritual emotional and psychosocial trauma that presses and melts them into victim status.

We are both sinners and saints at the same time. The world is broken but yet created and correct. We are damaged and perverted but healed and renewed. When we accept the healing power of the person of the Holy Spirit, we are positioned for transformation. We have to be stripped down and renewed to be saved. In order to become victors we must replace the old with the new and the good within has to be reconstituted and remodeled.

Even though Tamar was sexually abused and countless numbers of girls and women are sexually abused, they can rise above the abuse and live authentic whole and healthy lives. When AAW are brought into a closer communion with God, connect with Jesus Christ saving power through prophetic Holy Spirit led preaching focused on their oppression and needs; their healing begins. "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything has passed away; everything has become new" (2 Cor 5:17). The good news is that receiving and connecting to Christ makes it possible for women to shed the pain from the abuse and the damage done to their self-esteem, value and worth. Women can become victorious. They can release the shame, guilt and self-hatred. They

become whole and well when the person of the Holy Spirit is invited into their circumstances. Why this prescription? The person of the Holy Spirit has power to eradicate evil and provide transformation. The Bible supports this supposition. This writer supports Paul with this statement.

> Either we will believe the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of life and power and of all unity and holiness, or we will live as though the Spirit is incapable of making a real difference in our lives. Either we will seek the Spirit in true repentance and humble expectation, or we will ignore to our own peril the very source of our ongoing life together.[38]

The Holy Spirit joins us to Christ, our savior, but unlike other men (abusers) who are obsessed with power and control (over women), the savior to whom the spirit bears witness to when we (AAW) are joined, it precisely a savior who gives up power and control. The savior himself is himself victimized. In order for women to be freed from the stronghold and paralysis brought on by sexual abuse, women need saving. If women could have saved themselves, they would have. If women could have stepped out of the chasm of the private desolation in which they live, they would have. In order to defeat the death grip choking the life out of them, women need the saving power of something otherworldly and supernatural. There is great necessity and value in clinical counseling but it is Christ salvivic power that is fully capable of sanctifying women and restoring them through God's grace by the working of the power of the Holy Spirit.

There is a way to discard displaced anger, fear, resentments and feelings of unworthiness and abandonment when women recognize that "the real sin has been

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[38]Jason Vickers, *Minding the Good Ground A Theology for Church Renewal* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press 2011), 41.

against them."[39] Women can find a spiritual home as new understandings are taught. Women can become liberated from the bondage of the residual effects of childhood sexual abuse and further rape and molestation in their lives.

AAW abused women confess promiscuousness because they did not know any better and thought it was a man's prerogative. In early childhood and years of abuse, women tapped into their sexual power or lack thereof over men. AA abused women believed that they were supposed to accept abuse from husbands and boyfriends because they deserved it.

Forgiveness for the perpetrator and themselves is necessary. Forgiveness and atonement is a large part of healing. When AAW are able to forgive themselves for owning the abuse and are able to forgive the perpetrator, healing starts. This is not easy. This is not an instant, one sermon, one revival and one seminar event. This is a life-long pursuit for wholeness. The From Victim to Victor revival and seminar can start the process.

When human beings accept Christ and atone for sin they did not commit they can heal. When AWW prays for the one that sinned against them they can heal. When AAW forgives the perpetrator and themselves healing happens. This researcher is grateful that women can take off the old and put on the new. As Reverend Jesse Jackson taught African Americans, I am somebody. When AAW understand that Jesus the Christ died for all of our sins and what that sins mean, women can stop holding onto the thought of sin, discontinue being victims and become victorious. How does this understanding line

[39]Stephanie Y. Mitchum, *Introducing Womanist Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 109.

up and intersect with our Christian understanding? Elaine Heath explains atonement this way.

> In his pubic execution before a jeering crowd, Jesus experienced exactly the kind objectification that is inflicted upon women, men and children whose naked bodies are broken for the sexual entertainment of others. Through the cross, Emmanuel, God is with us, took into his own body and spirit the humiliation and the agony of our sexual abuse. Jesus carried the shame of every victim's cross – those of us who survived and those who didn't—to his own cross disarming ruler and authorities," the arbiters of shame, so that they no longer have the power to define us (Col 2: 9-15) Atonement for us survivors means that through the power of Jesus' resurrection, we are no longer doomed to live our lives out the broken consequences of abuse.[40]

Entering into a relationship with Jesus Christ and locking into the fact that Jesus knows the shame of every naked body, every unsolicited breath breathed upon us, every person who took authority over us, every person that violated and desecrated us have are forgiven and can no longer define us. Jesus was beaten and took our humiliation so that we could transform into who God intended for us to be. We can are ready to either claim or reclaim the women we are. We can ask for forgiveness of our sins and know they are forgiven. We find or reconnect with the good within and become reconstituted and remodeled. We are no longer sinners. We are good. We are both sinners and saints at the same time. The world is broken but yet created and correct. We are damaged and perverted but healed and renewed.

> Every movement we make in response to God has a ripple effect, touching family, neighbors, friends and community. Belief in God alters our language. Love of God affects daily relationships. Hope in God enters into our work. Also their opposites- unbelief, indifference, and despair. None of these movements and responses, beliefs and prayers, gestures and searches can be confined to the soul.[41]

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[40]Heath, 125.

[41]Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message //Remix The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Naves Press, 2003), 2179.

To illustrate this point the writer was led to the letter Paul wrote to Philemon while imprisoned. Onesimus was originally a slaved owned by Philemon. Philemon sent Onesimus to prison because he ran away from him after stealing valuables. Onesimus met Paul in prison. Paul's witness to Onesimus helped transform Onesimus from a runaway thieving slave into a man fit for ministry. While in prison, Paul taught, ministered and preached to him. Once Onesimus met Paul, He no longer held the status of a slave after he accepted Christ.

"Slaves were considered nothing more than pieces of property to be bought, sold, and used for any purpose whatsoever. Life was not easy for slaves. They could be beaten for minor offenses and even crucified for running."[42] Because Paul intervened, Onesimus accepted Christ as his savior and Christ transformed him into a useful and valuable person. From the writer's lens, Onesimus was transformed. Paul pled for Philemon to accept Onesimus back into his home and life because of Onesimus' transformation made Onesimus useful for ministry for both Paul and Philemon. This leads the writer to believe that the same can happen for survivors of abuse.

This story is important because Paul sought to bring mercy into the Roman system where Christians were concerned. Old testament law was merciful to slaves but Roman law beat slaves and treated them badly for minor offenses. Paul emphasized to Philemon that Onesimus now possessed a heart like Paul's and was no longer the slave or person he used to be. He was free.

This story is important to this project because, "Philemon and Onesimus, the slave owner and slave who figure prominently in this letter from Paul, had no idea that

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[42]*The Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 1665.

believing in Jesus would involve them both in radical social change. But as this brought the two of them together, it did. And it still does.[43]

AAW while in the prison of the residual effects of sexual abuse can be healed and made free as well. The good within will be found reconstituted and remodeled so they may now be of good use to themselves, their families and their church. Our reconstitution consists of being transformed into women "whose lives are characterized by things like love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, kindness, and self-control.[44] There is good news, AAW can move from victim to victors because "the Holy Spirit forms the mind of Christ in believers"[45] and we AAW can experience healthiness and wholeness. Sexual Abuse victims and women living in the aftermath of terror can regain their voice and become who God intended them to be.

No longer do girls or women have to live without hope or hope someone will look into their eyes to see the hidden woman underneath. Those living in bondage or are in paralysis can hear great preaching and transform as Onesimus did. They no longer have to be slaves or the person they used to be for any reason. They can become their authentic selves and return to their families healed and whole. Learning about Jesus Christ message can do this. Girls and women can have the blessed assurance that the Savior has not passed her by but stopped at her address. Girls and women will awaken from their sleep and find their voice and authentic selves. They can move from victim to victory.

A competent Christian Pastoral Care Counselor, attendance at twelve step groups for survivors of incest, journaling and other tools should be used with the Christian

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[43]Peterson, 2179.

[44]Vickers, 76.

[45]Ibid.

understanding that the Holy Spirit is there guiding and stirring up the gifts (2 Tm 1:6) and vindication takes place. The church becomes renewed when victims become victorious and this revival will renew lead us to church renewal.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

This project seeks to raise awareness and restore voiceless women to improved living. This project seeks to help them connect to God so inner individual renewal happens as the Central CME Church is renewed. The researcher lives with a particular understanding of womanpower. This understanding guides this Doctor of Ministry project because the researcher lives with optimism and hope. She believes the world can be saved and that she can save the world if she allows the Jesus in her to help just one woman acquire healing and wholeness. One healed woman can save her family. Once her family is healed, it can save their church. That church can save a neighborhood. The neighborhood can save a community. The community can save a city or town. The city or town can save a state. The state can save a nation. One nation can save another nation and then save the world. This evangelistic renewing movement will happen because the writer dares to believe that helping one woman can save the world.

The writer can make this claim because of her own story. Having a Jeremiah call experience at six years of age, which she did not understand and feared, caused her to distance herself from any possibility of being an integral part of the church and connecting to God; even though throughout her life people continuously told her that she was a preacher. Growing up on the south side of Chicago and attending parochial and public schools provided two different types of educational experiences for the writer. Her

family of origin caused her to desire ascension and crossing over into a different life. She was reared in a dualism that made her live sometimes in reality and sometimes in fantasy. Her life was ladened with sadness and sorrow and HAN because of the early abuse she suffered.

In the nineteen eighties the writer got tired of paralysis, wearing symbolic ashes on her head as Tamar did. She knew that something had to change. What is amazing is that through all of the muck and dirt, failed alliances and relationships of her life, she always managed to find jobs. She managed to attend Loyola University and graduate. She managed to attend Spertus College and received a Masters degree in Human Services Administration. But even though the writer squeezed out those accomplishments, her daughter kept getting in trouble and her family got worse. The writer had no help and admittedly did not pay her daughter the kind of attention she needed because of her own self-indulgence. The writer was trying to keep her promise to her daughter but kept falling short. She kept educating herself hoping education would get them both out of this HAN existence. However nothing was going right, and the writer experienced failure repeatedly with her daughter, personal relationships and job satisfaction.

One day the pain was so severe that the writer cried out to God. She fell down on the floor and cried deep cathartic tears for at least twenty-four hours consecutively. She cried out to the God she prayed to as a child. She confessed to God, that she had gone to all kinds of helping professionals but nothing was working. She confessed that she could not do this thing called life alone. She cried out to God admitting that she needed a change. She begged for God's help. She acknowledged that no one had ever helped her except her now deceased aunt who had died when the writer was in her twenties. She

admitted that she had fallen away from the One that claimed her early on. She confessed that she needed God and invited the Holy Spirit to come back into her life. She repented for her disobedience to God. She acknowledged that she had heard God call her and repented for trying to live life her way. She decided to yield and submit and become God's woman.

God heard her cry. After her reconnection and recommitment to God one day the writer shared her deep sorrows with a co-worker and during this conversation he asked, "Have you tried God?" The writer was amazed that someone else mentioned God so quickly after she cried out to God. She regrouped and started attending a United Methodist church in Chicago where this co-worker attended.

Afterward her daughter started going with her and they begin praying together. Things began to change. Things slowly but surely began to turn. The writer could see incremental changes. Her thinking started changing. Things slowly but surely improved. Doorways that were formerly closed began to open.

The writer left that church. As the writer searched for a new church, her Administrative Assistant recommended Carter Temple Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in Chicago. It was a good church. It had the rhythm of her grandmother's church but the familiarity of the Catholic Church where her spiritual formation began. Reciting the Apostle's Creed every Sunday helped to affirm her faith.

Her Pastor's sermon's helped her answer God's call on her life. The writer was transformed by her pastor's powerful preaching. The writer has experienced how powerful Holy Spirit driven preaching can help a woman connect to God and become new. The writer trained under one of the most dynamic leaders in the CME church. Her

Pastor, now a Bishop in the CME Church, guided her with sound theological training. He allowed her to stretch, grow and use the gifts God had given her. Under his leadership, this writer learned to edit the book he wrote, teach new member training class, and learn how to conduct herself in the pulpit, prepare and teach Bible study lessons. This involvement helped to prepare her for full-time ministry when the opportunity arrived. She often felt a stirring in her heart to answer her call to ministry but never moved forward. She was in the church for several years before stepping forward accepting her formal call. She sang in the choir for years. Accepting her call became a decision more than anything else. And now this writer, who has been saved, is ready to save the world other than, who can build a coalition that will save the world.

The methodology that supports this project is based on a revival held at Central CME Church and small groups with a concentration on abused women. The intention of this project was to allow the Holy Spirit to release her healing power upon the attendees. The hypothesis is that catharsis will happen and persons will be liberated and vindicated.

In order to achieve this researcher divides the methods and data collection into two groups. After describing these two groups the researcher will provide data to support her claims. The first group is girls and women at large attending the revival. The revival has a specific purpose and is targeted to a pre-identified segment of the community. The revival will not discriminate, however, it will publicized as a need-based opportunity for girls and women to come and deal with issues and challenges that may not be common to the general churchgoer; abuse. The challenge of the revival from the very beginning is that it provides no pre-guaranteed number of persons who might be in attendance like Sunday morning worship. In many ways, a targeted revival is a significant leap of faith

for both the church and those who may attend. The church would have to walk by faith that God would send a harvest and the targeted segment of the community would need to be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit in their lives to come and receive healing and wholeness. Each night was purposefully thematic; it was designed to deal with a specific area of abuse in unapologetic ways. The revival was different from Sunday morning worship, which has as a goal, presenting the Word of God in a general way so that whoever may come on a particular Sunday can be blessed. The writer will use the Revival Effectiveness Scale (See Appendix B) designed by the writer to collect data. Attendees completed the form.

The second group is those pre-selected for the small group study. The second pre-selected group met in small groups using discussion, education and writing out their thoughts, reactions using the Self Evaluation Sharing Page (See Appendix B) for sharing. This page was used to help women develop a journal of their feelings so they any reference how they move forward in their progress.

Prior to the beginning of the revival, a pre test entitled the Survey of Knowledge (Appendix B) was administered to each participant to capture their feelings and knowledge regarding abuse and its systemic affects. During the initial gathering, participants signed consent forms (Appendix B) granting them admission to the project and process of healing. A posttest Survey of Knowledge (Appendix B) was administered at the conclusion of the revival to measure changes in perception and knowledge of abuse.

There will be two follow-up seminars with the project facilitator and eight women (survivors). The first seminar discussed the three sermons and the accompanying music.

The second seminar discussed things they learned in sermons. This segment assisted in equipping and empowering the participants. The third seminar discussed the effectiveness of the group seminar and provided a technique that new victors could use to begin thriving.

The writer hoped to learn if transformation, education, liberation or vindication happened in the small groups setting. The writer hoped that small groups would allow women to have a time for sharing with fewer women to dig even deeper and provide a place for healing. The small groups are to be the real cathartic place where more intense healing will happen. For the small group, baseline information gathered and collected through interviews will allow the participants to have a measure to see how far they have come in their journey. The plan is to review what they shared after several subsequent meetings. Below are the stories shared by the women and are to be used as baseline start-up places. The hope is that at the end they will have different ways to understand their stories and to live their lives as victors.

The writer hoped to find out if revival was an effective way to reach into the hearts of women so that healing, catharsis, transformation and vindication from the aftermath of the terror of abuse would happen. The writer sincerely wanted other women to experience the kind of release she has experienced.

Their Stories

J[redacted]

J[redacted] is a member of St. James CME Church in Flint, Michigan. J[redacted] admits that this is the first time she ever told this story aloud to anyone. J[redacted] is in her mid-sixties but was eighteen years old at the time her story begins. J[redacted] recalls that at the

last minute, her sister could not go to the skating rink so her family allowed her to go with a trusted family male friend. When skating ended he stated that he needed to stop at his house for something before taking her home. She knew she liked him but he was much too old for her. Even though she was apprehensive, he convinced her to come in and enter his bedroom. He started kissing her. This trusted family friend would not stop. She was ambivalent about her feelings. He painfully forced himself on her and raped her. She says that she had put herself in this position and she was a virgin.

After stopping, he took her home at her request; there was a deadening silence in the car. When her monthly ministration period came, she felt relieved and believed she was okay. For forty-eight years she kept this secret. She and this man were in each presence over the years and never said a word about the incident again. She never told anyone because if it were revealed, the now married perpetrator's wife would be hurt. J[redacted] recognizes that she was emotionally scarred and carried the pain around because there had never been any communication. No one ever asked her how she felt about what happened to her. But how could they when she never told anyone.

Since her rape, J[redacted] felt unattractive. And while she reports that she had always been large, her largeness made her feel more unattractive. She saw herself as different. She began to think other girls were always smarter than she. Her school performance was not as good as it could have been. She did not have parental push to do homework. Her glee club instructor made her feel unappreciated for having a first soprano voice. She thought anyone could sing better than she. She was not social because her parents were strict and overprotective. She did not have great social experiences. She did not have the desire to go places. She isolated herself.

She developed suspicions about men. Her uncle made her feel uncomfortable by paying her too much unwanted attention. It felt sexually driven. She knew inwardly there was sexual tension between them but nothing ever happened. This same uncle had a grandson who came to live with him. J[redacted] watched her uncle interact with his grandchild and the kid was constantly and repeatedly begging her uncle and his grandfather to *stop- stop-stop*. She could feel that something was wrong. J[redacted] was resentful of this man and did not know why. She feels as if he increased her suspicious nature.

C[redacted]

C[redacted] is a member of Central CME church. C[redacted] is in her early forties. She attended church most of her life. She attended Christian Schools for the greater part of her early education. Since she was about three or four years of age she has been the recipient of physical and sexual abuse over her lifetime by many different men in her family and by outsiders. The early introduction came from within her dysfunctional family. She wanted to be a part of this study to help relieve women from this horrible, crippling disease and plight. She hoped to help loosen some of their paralysis.

C[redacted] felt her mother's boyfriend stung her deeply by his words of torment, taunting and loathing. Though he acted as if he was joking, he was not.

When C[redacted] was eight years old, she was sent to visit her father who lived in another state. Her father's younger brother about age sixteen or seventeen slipped into her bedroom at night when people were asleep. He pulled C[redacted] into the attic and would do sexual things to her. She had become accustomed to abuse that she lost details because her mother's brother had previously abused her. This paternal uncle called her piggy

publically and demeaned her; this overwhelming feeling caused humiliation. This teenaged abuser degraded her with his words and cut down her sense of self-worth after abusing her during the night.

When she was about eleven or twelve, a relative who lived in an adjacent apartment kept hard pornography lying around his apartment. He often got drunk and fell out. She was repulsed and captivated at the same time by the pornographic pictures.

A different maternal uncle began having sex with her when she was about three years old. This uncle did not humiliate her as her other predatory uncle did. She felt as if this uncle courted her and treated her as if she was a princess, therefore, she did not feel as if anything was wrong. While he behaved loving, he repeatedly abused her body, soul, spirit and mind. He did these acts at night. He took her arms and pinned her down. He inserted his tongue in her mouth and inserted his fingers in her vagina and rubbed her breasts. C[redacted] felt as if she was opened to doom at night. Her love for this uncle helped break her down but was repulsed by him at the same time.

C[redacted] feels as if she contributed to all of this. These early experiences made her unable to develop defenses. She was never able to figure out what to do and how to behave. Internally she felt as if she was okay but she really was not.

Because of her early experiences, a neighborhood boy named Milo (not real name) came to play with her. Because she was familiar with sex she let him kiss her. She had never been penetrated before, but now she experienced penetration as Milo raped her. C[redacted] fought him because the penetration hurt so awfully bad. After raping C[redacted], Milo told everyone in the neighborhood she was a whore. She felt as though she deserved it because she should have never let anyone in the house.

She remembers walking down the street as neighborhood boys calling her names. Every time Milo saw her, he called her ugly, dishrag and snake in the face. She never retorted. She began to think she was unattractive. She started seeing the merit in what they were saying. She decided that these boys could see inside of her abuse. They could see how dirty she was and who she really was. They could see her hideousness. They could disrespect her.

As a result of these early experiences, C[redacted] began to have unhealthy relationships with food. She felt physically broken. Her emotional pain was so great that she felt like a shotgun was being shot off inside of her. She discovered food, realizing that food took the pain away. She realized that food brought good feelings for her. C[redacted] looked forward to food. Her mother bought healthy foods but C[redacted] leaned toward fast food. The fast food felt good going down. The weight caused men not to see her. They did not approach her for sex after the weight gain. C[redacted] says living in the cocoon and safety of fat allowed her to collect herself. She reports that her unhealthy relationship with food is now subsiding. Her unhealthy relationship with men is now subsiding.

A[redacted]

A[redacted] is a member of a sister CME Church. A[redacted] is in her late forties. While she was always in church, she had a daughter at seventeen years of age. A[redacted]'s mother treated her badly for the rest of her life for getting pregnant and birthing at age seventeen. A[redacted] never felt she was good enough because at age two, she received third to fourth degree burns. She was hospitalized for one year. People told her she was ugly and she felt ugly. Her brothers physically, verbally and emotionally abused her. They constantly

threatened her. She lived in fear for her life. Her mother never protected her and as a result, A[redacted] never felt protected anywhere. She married the same man twice who was verbally, mentally, and physiologically abusive to her. She felt as though she could not leave because she had no choice. Her husband told her that no one else wanted her. She was made to financially support her mother because her mother was unemployed. Her husband fathered other children throughout their relationship and she was made to take care of them.

A[redacted]

A[redacted] is a member of Central CME Church. A[redacted] is in her late thirties. She reports that she suffers the residual effects of abuse from the direct abuse waged upon her mother. Her father is sixty-four and her mother is fifty-two. A[redacted] grew up disliking her father because he was mean. She lives in a pattern of long term family abuse because her grandfather beat her grandmother.

A[redacted] does not believe her mother did anything to get beaten. Her mother was a good and sweet woman. Her father belittled her mother. He called her fat, lazy and bitch. Constantly calling her names lowered her mother's self esteem.

A[redacted] reports that her mother never knew her own father. Her mother put aside her dreams, goals and ambition to become a devoted wife and mother. A[redacted] reports that her mother achieved that goal. A[redacted] believes her mother viewed her husband as a father figure. A[redacted]'s mother wanted to go to school and get a degree but her husband did not want her to go. In 2007 A[redacted]'s grandmother passed without revealing who her grandfather was to A[redacted] or to A[redacted]'s mother.

The first time A[redacted] could comprehend the abuse was when she drove to Dayton, Ohio to be with her mother. A[redacted] stayed a few days and A[redacted]'s father apologized to her for his behavior toward her mother. A[redacted] said it was belittling and disgusting; she would never go back to visit again. This visit affected A[redacted]. She now has trust issues with men. A[redacted]'s mother has never divorced this man. He comes and goes in and out of A[redacted]'s life as he pleases. A[redacted]'s parents are not together but her father still belittles her mother when he tells her that "lots of single mother's raise their kids and she has not done anything so great".

She feels as if no man or woman should be in abusive relationships. A[redacted] holds a grudge toward her father. A[redacted] never recalls him helping her with homework. The one time A[redacted] earned a D in school, her father talked about putting her in a foster home. A[redacted]'s father emulates his own father according to A[redacted]. She resents his verbal abuse. He verbally abused and hit her once; she recalls and vowed never to let a man ever hurt her again. She believes that her father's treatment of her and her mother affects her relationship with men. She believes her mother's abusive relationship has affected her relationship with her children's fathers. She refuses to marry either father.

A[redacted] resents her father because he made her mother put her dreams and goals on hold. Her mother tolerated his cheating. The hostility between her parents has carried over. Her grandmother stayed in an abusive situation until her husband passed away.

A[redacted] wonders what made her mother stay. A[redacted] deals now with the issue of her son being bullied at school. She wonders is there a pattern?

Q[redacted]

Q[redacted] is a member of Central CME Church. A womanizer whom she had been in relationship with for five years is stalking her. She tried to live stably with him. He did provide financially for her. She caught him and another woman in their bed. This same woman comes and goes about freely in her home. She found this woman's bracelet in their bed.

They have a school age son together but this man does not support him financially, emotionally or spiritually. In January 2013 she received sole custody of their child from the judicial system.

She recalls going out to a bar but her womanizing companion did not want to go. He pinned her down put a sock in her mouth, pushed her backward, bent her big toe backward and broke it. She received a contusion. Her former boyfriend kept her keys to keep her from leaving. She felt trapped. She felt crazy and wondered how she got into this bizarre relationship. She had to step out of character to survive. Q[redacted] could not stop her ex from cheating.

In October of 2012 he bought her a van and later spray painted it. He burst out the windows. Q[redacted] finally reached her breaking point when he slapped her and she hit his car in retaliation. This was the first time she ever hit anyone in her life. He slapped her co-worker and she got fired. He comes by any given Sunday at any time. He shot a gun about eight times recently at her home and van and she is living in fear. He has had her sister arrested. During Halloween he blacked her eye. In their intimate moments when they were doing well together he took nude photographs of her. He later posted them on the Internet.

She lives in fear and terror. She feels less powerful and the beatings have made her feel as if she is not enough. She now says that she hates him and does not want this anymore. She is tired of the abuse, lying, cheating and degradation. She finally got the courage to leave him. He texts her that he will kill her. He now further stalks her by joining Central CME. She has met someone else and is currently dating.

A[redacted]

A[redacted] attends Central CME church. A[redacted] is in her late sixties. A[redacted] says as far back as she can remember, she had a need to be loved. She believes that she is no different from anyone else. She is beginning to understand that it is how you go about getting that love is what can make or break you.

A[redacted] was married for twelve years to a heroin addict. She worked two jobs to support him and his habit. When he needed drugs, she worked harder. They constantly argued about money, name-calling and he slapped her around. He thought she should take care of the household. He did not come home.

Her husband never told her about drugs in the beginning. She saw symptoms. His arm swelled. Things disappeared from the house. A[redacted] felt that she was a good woman and could change him. She thought her husband would recognize the good in her and would appreciate her. He did not. They had a child together. When their son was born she thought things would get better. He sold their son's bike. She aborted their second child because of the circumstances in which she was living.

The first time she knew he was a user was when she went into the bathroom and speckles of blood were all over the floor. She questioned him about the blood and his attitude immediately changed. The more she questioned him the more belligerent he

became. He finally turned around and slapped her in the face with his open hand. Her face was swollen. She fought back and they wrestled.

When she would not cash in some bonds she owned, there was a physical confrontation. He had hit her and she loved him. He came back and smoothed things over. Ashamed and embarrassed she called no one. She finally got tired and moved. He was a thirty eight year old atheist who died from an overdose. She had hoped that he would convert to Christianity.

A began to search for a new man who would love her. She met another guy and she thought he was good. He too was a heroin addict. She stayed with him for twenty-eight years. She does not know why she stayed. She was now in the same type of situation as before. She was the breadwinner and because she was she thought she had the upper hand. She would use this status as leverage in this marriage. It did not matter. She was ashamed of herself for how she allowed this man to treat her. He died at fifty from his lifestyle and drug overdose.

From the age of five A was always a fat kid. Her mother made her clothes because they could not find store bought clothes large enough to fit. As a child she cried a lot, was picked on and talked about. Other children and adults called her names such as pig. A became introverted. She did not want to go out a lot. She was so fat that she stayed in the safety zone of her home. She sat in the back of the class because she did not want to be seen. She would run home to her mother and father and go in her room and bathroom and cry. Her parents thought everything was fine. A never remembers being attractive.

At age sixteen, her weight dropped suddenly. Her sister in law took her to the beauty shop, cut her hair and helped her purchase up to date clothing. A[redacted] started feeling good about herself and consequently met a guy. He used to fight her a lot. She got pregnant. She carried the baby for nine months.

As she assessed herself, she did not think she was smart enough to attract a different caliber of man. She compared herself to other women and always lost. She was a C student in grade and high school. A[redacted] was able to get along with everyone because she did not like controversy. She liked being alone. She did not say much, like cliques and did not join clubs.

It was when she accepted Christ, as her savior that she came to know men did not love her correctly. Today she is still working to be a blessing and know that God is with her. She is learning to overcome the abuse of her early life.

D[redacted]

D[redacted] is a member of Central CME Church. She is an over forty year old married woman. She reports that she is not in love with her husband but loves him. He is in love with her. She feels the division. Her husband has never put her on a pedestal as other husbands do. Her husband constantly accuses her of doing things she is not doing. Because D[redacted] is outgoing with a bubbly personality, she attracts others to her and her husband continually accuses her of being flirtatious. She constantly defends herself. Her husband is a negative thinker. She states that she suffers from emotional abuse and is treated as though she is a Jezebel. D[redacted] is not sure how she got this label because she was a tomboy growing up. She had many male friends and this continued in her adult life. Her husband does not understand the concept of male friends. Her husband is jealous of

her. D[redacted] loves him but continually has to defend herself. They break up and keep going back together. Her husband has another daughter that was conceived while they were married and D[redacted] did not find out about this child until one year later.

D[redacted] feels stuck in her spirit and is in a loveless marriage. She left in 2008 seeking other companionship outside of the marriage. Others tell her that friends are betting to see who will leave the marriage first because there seems to be no chemistry between them.

During the marriage she became sickly and her husband was numb to the fact that she was ill. During that period he still expected her to optimally run the household not noticing that she was ill. Her husband's response is that she is always sick. She suffers with migraine headaches and her husband does not care or pay attention to her when she is ill.

D[redacted] says that there is no physical or verbal abuse but in the same breath relates this story. One evening she slept on the couch after she had gone through his phone records. She found nude pictures of other women. After she confronted him, "he took sex from her" after she said no. She cried throughout that period. She packed up and left for a full year. A cousin fondled her five-year old daughter and this was devastating to her.

As D[redacted] relayed more of her story, it was disconnected and difficult to follow. But she reports that her husband makes her feel unworthy to get the things they need in life. He makes her feel less than.

J[redacted]

J[redacted] is a member of Central CME Church. She is in her fifties. She participated in this study because she wanted to help, but also assures me that she has gone through

intensive treatment and recovery and shares her story to help others. I agree that she is a victorious woman now but her story should be told.

J[redacted] is a high-ranking city servant for the city of Detroit and serves the public interest. Because of her current posture, carriage and poise she does not appear to have suffered abuse. But yet, her former husband shot and left her for dead. Before the shooting, he broke her nose, and damaged her eye. He psychologically abused and raped her. She had an affair to retaliate and hurt her husband. She left him twice but returned to this abusive situation. She does not know why she returned to him.

According to J[redacted] he broke her down by terrorizing her. He shot her with the intent to kill her and she was rushed to the hospital in her uniform. Her legs were torn apart from trying to climb through shattered glass. She was in a coma for two or three days. This private hell she lived in became public after he shot her. Once it became public she was no longer ashamed. She felt this day was Freedom Day.

J[redacted] says that her body healed but every once in a while chips move around in her body. She had emotional and psychological scars. The abuse she suffered affected her entire family.

J[redacted] sought out treatment with a different church group long before this project, and sought out treatment for her son who witnessed the continued abuse.

But today she is a strong advocate for women helping them seek justice.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

The Project

March 13, 14, 15, 2013 touched the lives of many girls, women and men at Central CME Church. Central CME is located at 7600 Tireman Avenue in Detroit, Michigan. The writer believes that spiritual and healing doors were opened for those in attendance. Over a period of three evenings, this writer embarked upon the sensitive subject of Sexual Abuse and Domestic Violence. With a tremendous amount of prayer and preparation and trust in the person of the Holy Spirit, the three evenings began. In order to determine the effectiveness of specialized worship and preaching, the writer implemented a three-night revival addressing the problem of victimized African Americans terrorized by sexual abuse and domestic violence. The revival was opened to any African American girl or woman wanting to attend. The revival's intentional design was to touch heavy emotions and liberate spiritual paralysis partnered with statistics; resources and information. This was to assist women as they got in touch with their latent and buried feelings thus promoting catharsis. This was the writers intent and in the hands of the Holy Spirit.

The men of the church asked if they could attend so they could learn more about the subject and this writer consented. While the revival targeted African American

women, one Caucasian woman attended coming forward bringing a tearful testimony the first evening.

At the outset of every evening, all girls, men, and women were given one band aide asking them to put it on as they entered the sanctuary. The band aide was symbolic of people covering wounds. It was explained that wounds could not heal well when they are covered. At the end of each evening in a very deliberate and intentional way, participants were asked to remove their bandage and uncover their wounds so healing could begin. This was symbolic of the catharsis.

While nightly attendance was not taken as doing regular Sunday morning worship, approximately four hundred women participated over the three-night period. Each night was purposefully thematic designed to deal with a specific area of abuse in unapologetic ways. Each night's theme reflected the title of the sermons. On night one Sexual Abuse was addressed and entitled. "You are Not Alone". Night two addressed Domestic Violence and was entitled, "I Know Where to Find Help." Night Three was entitled, "A Change Gone Come." To view the detailed outline of each night of revival (Refer to attached program Appendix A). The writer preached using these topics and sought with Holy Spirit power to speak into the lives of abused unvindicated women.

A special one time choir comprised of girls and women of Central CME processed into the sanctuary to Vicki Winans recording, "Shake Yourself A Loose." with music blasting and the choir dancing, marching with cadence, texture and exuberance not normally present on Sunday mornings. They entered as if they were girls and women on a mission. At the end of each evening they marched out the sanctuary appearing more

victorious than when they entered to the same song of victory, "Shake Yourself A Loose."

The first evening entitled, "You Are Not Alone" addressed sexual abuse. The sermonic text was 2 Samuel 13: 10- 22. This was also the sermon title. The story of Tamar and Amnon was told. One of the participants later wrote.

> The revival was wonderful and without it she might have never known Tamar's story. Her story is necessary for churchgoers and believers of Christ. In the church we tend to mask the emotional necessary needs of the people and that in turn causes many to mask many situations at home. The revival created awareness that there are more women suffering at the hand or voice of abuse in our church and not just for those in shelters or not in the church. The revival has created and awareness within her in knowing and what constitutes abuse (Appendix B).

The second evening addressed Domestic Violence and the sermonic text Mark 5: 25-30 was used and the sermonic moment was entitled, I Know Where to Find Help. This message spoke to physically and emotionally abused girls and women and talked about finding the Holy Spirit as the anchor to help them find what they need.

A comment from a participant! "I was a victim of domestic violence. When I rejoined the church so did he. I felt I couldn't even have my own religion or the God I believed in without him. Through prayer and faith, I got the nerve to get my keys back put an alarm on my house and move forward. I don't think I let it go until tonight. I thought I had. I would have testified but men there made me apprehensive. But going to the altar helped me" (Appendix B).

Night three was A Change Gonna Come and the sermonic text John 5: 1-15 was used to help women suffering for many years to know that their help will come regardless of how long they have been lame and disabled. "This is a subject that was long overdue. But until now, it was suppressed in many victims because it wasn't something you discuss at the dinner table" (Comment from a responder Appendix 3).

On night-three girls and women were invited to come to the altar and receive water libation as water was poured on each woman symbolizing a new birth and spiritual rebaptism. This symbolized that had transitioned into new creatures in Christ.

One person was pre-selected over the three-night period to give her personal testimony about her terror and experience with abuse. Other women voluntarily came forward and shared in the sanctuary. Women came to the altar to unburden themselves. Special prayers, music and support were offered. The writer/revivalist demanded in love and gentleness that everyone present join together and take an oath and to treat the personal testimonies with sacred trust and confidentiality. Everyone verbally agreed to do so.

No one evening was better than the other in terms of content, but each evening brought newer levels of healing, transparency and vindication for those in attendance. Three sermons were written with the express purpose of offering an African American woman's perspective to the text with the ultimate plan to provide healing and hope.

Each evening built upon the one before. Attendance grew each evening. Each evening contained special prayers and litanies (included) written to specifically address abuse. Special praise including dance and song were delivered. Testimonies were given and special preaching was provided to address the hurts and unmet needs of the girls and women in the church.

To the uninformed eye, it might have appeared as though this three-day revival was just another Christian revival in the African American church; but this revival's focus coupled with the enthusiasm in which the participants embraced seemed to indicate that was not the case.

Data Collection and Methods

Qualitative research was used to get outcomes for the validity and effectiveness of the project. The methods and data collection were divided into two groups. The first group is girls and women at large attending the revival. The second group is those pre-selected for the small group study.

First Method—Review - Revival Effectiveness Scale For Attendees At Large

During each night, the revival effectiveness scale was passed out so women, not a part of the pre-selected revival group, would be able to provide feedback regarding the revival's impact. Attendees were given the Revival Effectiveness Scale (Appendix B) and were asked to complete a form each night they attended. They were asked to circle the night they attended and rate all three at the same time. It is not known if the ushers actually passed out the scales each evening and is unclear how many attendees opted not to complete the form; however ninety-one forms were completed and returned for the three-night period. The forms showed that the revival was successful. Women gave high ranking marks to the preaching and the song selections.

It was evident that the Holy Spirit showed up and moved throughout the sanctuary by the amount of crying, release and joy the women displayed. It was clear that the women of the church were in need of this type of revival.

For other comments written in the Revival Effectiveness Scale see (Appendix 3) in its entirety.

Analysis of the Data

It is concluded based on the results of the data that the revival did what it was supposed to do. The revival addressed the predicament of the sin of abuse that is cloaked in secrecy. Girls and women were able to make a vital first step of speaking aloud and naming the sin of secrecy thrust upon them by another. Those present at the revival were empowered to speak the betrayal of trust in a safe church environment. Catharsis happened. The Bible was used as a spiritual surgical instrument making incisions into the lives of those needing surgery at Central Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. Focused scriptures, specialized prayers, songs specific to healing and recovery, specialized preaching, testimonies and specialized liturgies released healing, transformation, and brought about hope. The following revival review corroborates these assumptions.

But here is the good news. The evidence of women being healed is ongoing. Women are more alive. They ask more questions. They participate more. They are trying to let the church know through their improved appearance, attendance at Bible Study and participation in church activities. They have verbalized to the pastor how they have been helped. They appear to have a light awakened in their spirit. They seem to be more connected to themselves and God and one another. The women of the church are asking for another revival.

Effectiveness Scales and comments written on forms provided information for data analysis. The high number of fours and fives indicate that this revival made a positive impact. The desired outcome of catharsis happened reported by women and the validity for change took place. The data shows that women were touched, transformed and renewal took place.

A theorem was proven. Specialized preaching dealing with sermons specifically designed for women suffering from the aftermath of abuse issues have relevance and add meaning. This researcher believes that women found vindication.

Question Five: Rate the effectiveness of the preaching.

(1) = 0 (2) = 1 (3) = 1 (4) = 3 (5) = 86

This means that of the ninety-one (91) evaluations collected, eighty-nine (89) people thought the preaching mostly met or did meet their needs. The researcher believes these ratings prove that these sermons were impactful and aided in catharsis.

Question number seven asked. How much did the revival impact your life?

(1) = 0 (2) = 2 (3) = 8 (4) = 14 (5) = 66

A higher number of participants was expected who said that the revival impacted them; however, the sixty-six participants that scored fives (5) and the fourteen (14) who scored fours was acceptable. It was hoped that all ninety-one (91) participants would have rated the number five; value is seen in the eighty women responses. The result from this question indicates that women received impetus to move into healing and wholeness and experience catharsis. This revival equipped women with the desire to leave their victim status behind and make a step toward becoming new creatures in Christ. The researcher believes that women attending the revival received at least one nugget of information freeing them from paralysis. This scale shows that girls and women were moved to new awareness and enlightenment.

One of the participants in the study wrote, "This revival helped me to restore what was taken from me. I am free and unburdened. This revival was needed because it

allowed not only the pastor to minister, but, it also allowed other women to minister to others by telling their story to others. I hope there will be a ministry that will grow from this so that other women and men can have a place to share and heal." For further detail of the report (See Appendix A).

Small Group Follow-up

Those present in the small groups did not feel as empowered to speak the betrayal of trust in a safe church small group environment. Eight women were preselected to continue in a group setting post revival beginning March 21, 2013 continuing through September 2013. This would allow for seven months of data collection. This did not happen because the women had scheduling conflicts, were unable to attend the revival, experienced babysitting problems as well as did not attend the sessions. The group met during March, April and May with limited and sporadic attendance. By June there were no active participants. Reminder phone calls were made and text messages were sent out to prompt meeting attendance.

March 21, 2013 - First meeting

The first group meeting of six participants lasted one hour. C[redacted] was unable to attend because of a scheduling conflict. J[redacted] was unable to actually attend the revival because of transportation issues. We both agreed that not attending the revival disqualified J[redacted] from attending the small groups since she had no baseline of what happened. J[redacted] was absent without explanation.

The women were still feeling the impact of the revival. They were in awe and admiration of the spiritual, technical, organizational, and transformational healing it

brought. Each participant was asked if she was willing to share how the revival impacted them and what each of them hoped to get from this group. They generally said the revival was like nothing they had ever experienced. The general response was they wanted to continue in small groups and see what would happen. They expressed the need for another revival because it impacted them in a deep and meaningful way. Yet individually, these women did not share in this setting. All of these women were members of Central. They talked about abuse in general. When the gathering ended the researcher reminded them of the next meeting on April 26, 2013.

April 26 2013 – Second meeting

D[redacted], A[redacted], A[redacted], and a guest, S[redacted] attended. Reminder calls and texts messages and E-mails were sent regarding the meeting. The discussion was about self-care surrounding abuse. The participants were more conversational. A[redacted] was the most responsive and conversational. A[redacted] arrived to the group very late with her school age boys and toddler after picking them up from work. She attempted to leave them in another room but they needed attention. She was distracted trying to tend to them in another room; therefore she could not fully participate.

D[redacted] was not very responsive but submitted in writing the following, "She thought that the revival was wonderful and without it she might have never known Tamar's story. Her story is necessary for churchgoers and believers of Christ. In the church we tend to mask the emotional necessary needs of the people and that in turn causes many to mask many situations at home." D[redacted] went on to say, "The revival created awareness that there are more women suffering at the hand or voice of abuse in our church and not just for those in shelters or not in the church." The revival has created

and awareness within her in knowing and what constitutes abuse. She thought the music selections were great! She did report that sometimes the musicians overpowered the voices and sometimes there was a disconnect. The preaching and teaching were demonstrative and exhilarating. D[redacted] believes that three days is long enough and perhaps we can do it once or twice a year. D[redacted] stated that the wrap-up meeting was not what she expected. She left feeling annoyed rather than relieved.

A[redacted] submitted two self-evaluation pages. The page dated April 6, 2013 said; "The revival meeting held on March 21, 2013 was encouraging for me. I'm still working on how to let go, building my self-esteem and loving myself. To hear others who have come through domestic and sexual abuse and have become stronger, more confident was encouraging for me. I did not realize how much of my past I suppressed. There are so many things I wanted to and did forget. Now that I'm thinking about it more, I need to learn how to forget those who abused, misused and misguided me. I also need to forgive them. But most of all, my greatest fear is if God has forgiven me. I pray that there will be more sessions in the future."

A[redacted] submitted another piece written on April 12, 2013. It said, "As far back as I can remember, all I ever wanted or needed was to be loved. I believe that I am no different from anyone else. I am beginning to understand it is how you go about getting that love that can make you or break you. As of now I am still broken. I don't know who I am. What is my contribution in life?"

A[redacted] verbalized her thoughts during this meeting stating that she knew she agreed to write down her thoughts but just did not have the time she thought she would when she initially agreed to participate. Her children took up more of her time that she initially

thought they would. A[redacted] stated however that she is not able to get past the hurt she received from her father. She just is not ready to forgive him for how he treated her and her mother. She believes her mother is still paralyzed from her his mistreatment of her mother. Her mother has no vibrancy and A[redacted] attributes it to her father. A[redacted] is not able to forgive him and is not sure she wants to. A[redacted] said that she tried to get her mother to attend the revival and attend Sunday morning worship but her mother does not accept the invitations.

J[redacted] was an encourager and the voice of experience. She encouraged them to stay strong but know it can be done and they can get better and forgive. She has forgiven the ex-husband that shot and left her for dead.

May 22, 2013 – Third Meeting

A[redacted], J[redacted] and the researcher were present. Reminder phone calls, text messages and e-mails were sent in advance. Ann reports that this group time is helping her to begin digging into those things, which she knew were buried and keeping her from becoming whole.

Since forgiveness was verbalized as the most difficult thing to do by those that have participated in the group and the larger revival group the researcher brought an article entitled, "Prayers of Lament and Mercy, taken from Elaine Heath's book, *We Were the Least of These*. The discussion was excellent because it helped those present to dig deeply into the work of unforgiveness. A[redacted] was so grateful as tears flowed from her eyes. Event though J[redacted] she has been through extensive treatment she was still somewhat unnerved recalling the events surrounding the domestic violence she suffered years ago. They said they wish more women had been present.

June 13, 2013 – Last meeting

No one attended except researcher even though phone calls were made. From the writers knowledge of group dynamics from her years in social work and behavioral health services she knew that when people stop attending they have self-terminated. The group faded out after this. Because the group faded, the posttest could not be administered. A discussion of small group sessions will discuss in chapter six of this document.

Outcomes

As stated earlier, the revival accomplished what it was designed to do. During the three-night revival, girls and women experienced catharsis. The revival helped uncover abuse, demystified sexual abuse, removed stigma and helped women become victorious. The specialized music, liturgies and prayers lifted women from a place of hurt and suffering into a place of hopefulness. Women verbalized that they were so glad that the stigma was uncovered. The testimonials and high number of fours and fives indicate that this revival impacted those that attended in a positive way. The participants moved from victim status and felt vindicated because someone was acknowledging their pain and suffering and uncovering the sin of secrecy inside a church building.

The level of information from the small group was less than what was hoped for. A possible reason was when discussed up close and personal, the information was too difficult for those in attendance to deal with in a group setting. The participants were still too wounded and paralyzed in a smaller group setting. While they attended the same church they did not really know one another. If they did, they were not willing to share in this context. Trust had not been established. Attending the same church prevented them

from the benefit of anonymity as in groups such as Alcoholic Anonymous, Narcotic Anonymous or Survivors of Incest. The participants would continue to see one another at church. This group of woman was not prepared to trusts their issues with other women of the church.

The first night began with a discussion format that was not very successful. In hindsight, leading with education and professional experience would have reduced the anxiety and apprehension of the participants. The women were not satisfied and not finding the post healing in this setting. The small group process did not provide the level of learning hoped for. However, one project participant, A[redacted] is a regular church attender and change has been seen in her appearance, demeanor and confidence. This participant seems to continue working toward her healing.

It was interesting that each evening at the end of each revival, women were huddled in corners talking openly, sharing their testimonies with one another. They seemed to bond and become comrades. Participants shared things they had never known before about each other. They felt close. They cheered for and encouraging one another at the end of each revival session. It was difficult to get people to leave the building. After looking at both models of data collection, sharing after the revival was most effective because there was safety in numbers.

Observation

The following account is another way of documenting how the revival met its goals. While attending a Sunday afternoon service on April 7, 2013 approximately three weeks post revival, a male leader of this service asked for personal testimonies about God's goodness in our lives. A fifteen year old African American girl, with no

knowledge of the revival three weeks earlier entered the pulpit area took the microphone and crying profusely while testifying that her grandfather sexually molested her. Her pain was visible and auditory. She verbalized that he had taken something precious from her; that she was dirty and no one understood or cared. The gut-wrenching, deep, howls of pain agony and tears, the deep compressed ache of HAN flowed from this girl. Her testimony went on for about thirty minutes. She stated that no one held her grandfather accountable.

This researcher could see that this girl needed healing and vindication through spiritual surgery. After she finished her testimony what took place next was remarkable. Holding and embracing her in my arms, girls and women were asked to come forward and form a circle of prayer around this young girl, and they did with a spirit of compassion, empathy and spiritual salve. A spiritual incision was made into that girl and we helped cut out some of the pain by prayer and words of comfort. The women held her, spoke words of love, and encouragement seeking to empower her. We assured her that she could bear this burden. We all assured her that she was not dirty. The women assured her that God was with her and would see her through. Her tears dried up and she seemed to get relief.

If this same incident would have happened pre-revival; there was no certainty how sensitive the women would have been to this young girl's plight. They might have been shocked and shunned by her. They might not have been able to understand her grief. This group of African America working and middle class and upper middle class women understood this girl's pain with genuine compassion. They provided non-judgmental care and support.

Afterwards, the girl and her mother entered the researcher/pastor's office to talk individually. Though this young girl had not attended the revival, the researcher asked her to participate in the next post revival meeting on April 26, 2013 for the small group participants. The researcher sent this letter along with a portion of the Candidacy Review Hypothesis to indicate the amount of time and investment the researcher had toward this subject and inform her of the next small group.

> Dear S[redacted], (name changed)
>
> I pray that you are on your way to recovery and that you will be able to take your power back. I am working toward my Doctor of Ministry and am approaching a subject of abused girls and women. Read below what I believe and is part of my Doctoral work I am writing. (I have not shared this with many people). They have been told about this but do not have what I am sending you.
>
> I pray that you will return to the next meeting on Friday, April 26, 2013 at 7:00 P.M. I am sorry you missed the revival but hope this lends some support (Mailed her the hypothesis statement from the Candidacy Review document.)

Thanks to the Holy Spirit, she received power to face her pain. S[redacted] attended the April meeting stating that this gathering helped her out tremendously but did not return. She later confided that it helped but would like to be among peers. One month later, she was serving happily as a youth usher, our eyes met during worship service with a knowing smile with each other.

Another unexpected outcome happened. One of the men of the church stating that he is a woman's advocate. He writes poetry designed to empower women and help them withstand abuses. His published book contains short poems and essays speaking to the hearts of women from a man's perspective. After reviewing his published work, he was invited to participate in future event toward overcoming the pain and trauma of abuse as the male voice of apologetics. He happily accepted.

Deeply embedded sin of secrecy that girls and women carry within was cut open for some participants and for others cut out. There is visible evidence of A[redacted] finding her lost voice. This revival moved participants from victims to victors by helping some women leave their victim status behind and taking steps toward becoming new creatures in Christ.

Second Method – Post Revival Small Group Participants

Eight women agreed to participate in the research pre and post revival. Participants were interviewed individually pre-revival and during the month of February 2013. The meetings were held in their respective homes, and Central CME Church. Each read and signed an informed consent form and took the pre-test. Each participant received a self- evaluation form so they could write their thoughts, discoveries, inspirations and other relevant information as needed. The participants agreed to tell their stories, attend and rate the revival and attend the post revival groups for continued dialogue and care. Their real names were not used. They selected their alternate names. They pseudo names were J[redacted], C[redacted], D[redacted], A[redacted], A[redacted], A[redacted] Q[redacted], and J[redacted]. They were all African American.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Reflections On Field Experience

The revival was what was hoped and prayed for. An established revival format for ministry was used and tailored specifically for girls and women with special needs. The specificity was ministry providing healing, transformation and the vindication from sexual and sins of brut power thrust upon them. Women's terror lessened during and post revival. Women uncovered abuse and reclaimed power and their lost voice. Attendance was excellent. The revival was well received and catharsis happened for some. The person of the Holy Spirit was present throughout the event.

Conclusion

Revival is an effective way to approach this sensitive subject matter. It provides a place for safe disclosure and healing. Compressed aches[1] were decompressed because this revival was effective as verbalized by numerous women and men who attended. This specific revival will become an annual event even though some women expressed that every six-months was good for them.

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[1]Andrew Sung Park, *From Hurt to Healing* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 11.

Reflections on a Modified Model

In reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of this project model, discontinuing the post revival small groups would be a necessity. During the post revival groups, it was learned that small group post revival sessions requires a different kind of leadership. Although licensed and qualified to facilitate the post revival sessions, it was difficult for participants to relate to me outside of my pastoral ministry. If small group sessions were considered in the future, it would be based on networking with an outside agency to supply qualified facilitators.

To meet that need instead of extended groups, an additional day would be added for debriefing following the last evening of revival. This would include separate breakout groups for women for sexual abuse, domestic violence and those suffering from the abuse of words and emotions. Locating others to conduct the break out groups with the same religious and spiritual understanding and passion for this project would be the challenge.

During the three day revival, more time would be added for testimonies as the girls and women verbally expressed or by writing on the revival effectiveness scale how much they benefitted from hearing about how others either overcame or are currently managing in the aftermath. A group for girls under the age of twenty-one would be designed for better peer association. It is undecided whether to include men in future processes as it became clear that men suffer with the same issues. If men are considered, collaboration with facilitators who specialize in abused males will take place.

Restatement of Model

There is a problem of African American girls and women regularly attending church and are living in terror; suffering from the aftermath of sexual abuse, domestic violence and emotional abuse without the support of the church through ministry programs, preachment or some form of outsourcing. Since African American churches are not widely addressing the sin of abuse cloaked in secrecy, girls and women continue operating as victims and are not fully able to build God's kingdom. The church can be a safe environment where this issue can be addressed. The person of the Holy Spirit must be able to break through the walls of layered terror. A three day revival where the Holy Spirit touches and reaches women in mass releasing her healing power is critical to healing and Soterios ultimately Shalom. The model was designed to induce catharsis. Specialized, prayers, songs, preaching and sermons, testimonies and specialized liturgies will release this catharsis. Central CME's church sanctuary was designed to be a spiritual surgical room and prayer was to become the doctor making incisions into the lives of women living in the aftermath of terror cutting into the pain and suffering connected to heinous sins of abuse, domestic violence and terror. In this context the researcher believes the Bible will serve as the scalpel and the Holy Spirit would sterilize, hold and guide this doctor's spiritual hands during surgery. Through revival held at church, girls and women become empowered to speak the betrayal of trust in a safe church environment.

> For the word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb 4:12

> KJV). When you pick up the Bible and read it, it will cut to the very depths of your being. The Bible is a powerful book![2]

The researcher further hypothesizes that after spiritual surgery, victimized women may begin making steps toward vindication. Perhaps these women have already negotiated some type of private spiritual band-aid; but revival will scoop and cut out the deeply embedded sin of secrecy they carry within. During post revival, a small group sample would meet for the purpose of continuing healing in a smaller group context.

Theological Reflection

The church is in need of renewal because many women are unable to function effectively in their roles because they have morphed into something other than what God intended for them. There are many reasons this has occurred, one being early childhood abuses altering African American girls and women from being able to live in the *Imago Dei*, image of God. However many women are not living and behaving in God's image because their image has been distorted by sins of early abuse introduced into their lives and later living as victims of domestic violence. Churches have a responsibility to meet these needs and create methods for this to happen; many are not doing so.

Postmodern churches have power to legislate church polity, policies, doctrine and ways of being; however, the church cannot legislate the hearts of people carrying out those responsibilities. Transformed hearts and minds bring about renewal and not written policies. Renewal impacts numerical, spiritual and financial growth in churches. How does renewal happen? How do churches reach the masses, reach men and women of every birth so that Jesus can draw them to himself (Jn 8:28) so they may be transformed

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[2]J. MacArthur, Jr. "How to Study the Bible," *John MacArthur's Bible Studies* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1996).

into renewed people. The church must provide ministry to meet the needs of God's people. In this context and for this Doctor of Ministry project, a three-day revival was utilized to meet the needs of girls and women.

God designed every person to live wholly and with a certain degree of happiness; the church has an obligation to fulfill that mission by insuring that it carries out programs, services and worship through ecclesia, while assuring God's nature is not lost in the process. In the book entitled *The Church's Public Role*, Stanley Hauerwas states, "The church should not be concerned with trying to change the world. It should seek to witness to the truth about God's ways with the world and recognize that it is precisely in such faithful witness that God brings the eschatological future of the peaceable kingdom into history."[3] What does this mean for the church's mission? This means that the church should not withdraw from the world, instead, we, as the church, must remain in the world, not of the world. As the church, we must provide the world with a different ethical perspective; we are to represent a different way of living in the world. A way of living that advocates for justice for the marginalized and oppressed, brings hope, provides hospitality to the stranger, exemplifies forgiveness and love for and to all, the church is to be what Jesus was to the world—a servant, and what God intends for the future of the world—peace/Shalom.

Hurting and terrorizing women is not God's plan because God, "Thinks thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you and expected end" (Jer 29:11 KJV). Women are unable to experience Shalom when they have been abused. God designed women to live contently as they fulfill many roles. God designed women to be helpers to their husbands,

[3]Dana Wilbanks, "The Church as Sign and Agent of Transformation," in *The Church's Public Role,* ed. Dieter T. Hessel (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1993), 27.

nurturers and first teachers of the children, strong viable leaders, and workers to advance Christendom as well as strong healthy and intelligent beings.

Success of Chapter Four

God showed up and the Holy Spirit did release her healing power. Because the trauma of abuse was catastrophic and leaves residual damage, women do not know or have forgotten that God loves, forgives, cares and restores. Girls and women carry around anger, resentment, bitterness and unforgiveness. The Holy Spirit released forgiveness. The selected Bible chapters and passages helped girls and women uncover their issues, deal with unforgiveness and catharsis was induced.

Paul understood that when a person connects with Christ as the Lord who arose from the tomb; that person becomes a new creation. Paul recognized that a decisive break happens when one connects to Christ. Everything, which has kept another in desolation and sin no longer has such, a stronghold when Christ enters. Paul informed the Corinthian church that they are to be judged for sexually immorality. Paul admonishes this church and goes so far as to ask Christians not to associate with those in the church who are sexually immoral. This is wonderful news for victims. Sexual immorality was addressed and is not to be accepted. Paul understood that when a person connects with Christ as the Lord who arose from the tomb; that person becomes a new creation. Paul recognized that a decisive break happens when one connects to Christ. Everything that has kept another in desolation and sin no longer has such a stronghold when Christ enters.

Bound women enslaved to the sin, bondage and the weight of victimization were freed. In Paul's letter to the Corinthians there is hope for taking off the old and putting on the new and at Central CME Church a similar experience happened. Women were

reconstituted and remodeled. Paul understood that when a person connects with Christ as the Lord who arose from the tomb; that person becomes a new creation. The writer experienced the move of girls and women connect to Christ as they were positioned to become renewed and free of victim behavior. Women were reconstituted and remodeled. Central CME Church finally pronounced that sexual immorality defiles the church and that it must be judged and should not continue. Victims were given permission to disconnect from their perpetrators emotionally and not to take on ownership for their suffering and terror. Women received vindication.

The move of the Holy Spirit allowed women to discard displaced anger, fear, resentments and feelings of unworthiness and abandonment because the women realized the real sin has been against them.[4] Women became liberated from the bondage of the residual effects of childhood sexual abuse and further rape and molestation in their lives.

Another Measure Of Success

Reflections of Chapter Five on the Methodology

The evaluation tools helped to substantiate the effectiveness of the revival and for those that attended the smaller groups, change did occur.

Lessons Learned

Valuable lessons learned from the project are that girls and women respond to this ministry model and women from the church are asking for it again. Women asked that it become a six-month event stating that it was needed in the church. They want to know that God is answering their prayers. They want to know their church is providing ministry

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[4]Stephanie Y. Mitchum, *Introducing Womanist Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 109.

that meets their needs. It was interesting to see the amount of men present and interested in this topic. But it was also interesting to note that women preferred for men not to attend the revival. Until a real clear workshop format is designed, small groups do not work unless more intensive work is put into the process.

Future Research

The number of men interested in this topic was interesting. Due a significant concern of abused men, research should be developed to help them through their pain and healing. Perhaps research can be done regarding the Christian men who are doing the same work and collaborate and partner with them to add a day for men at the revival.

APPENDIX A

FROM VICTIM TO VICTOR REVIVAL

Central Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

From Victim to Victor

3-Day Revival

Pastor. Patricia A. Havis - Revivalist

Okima Havis, Music Director

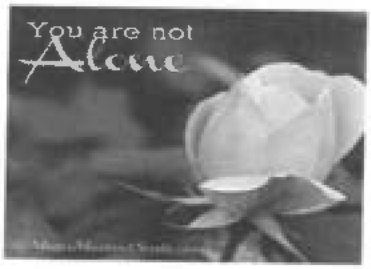
This revival was done in conjunction with United Theological Seminary in matriculation toward the Doctor of Ministry Degree.

Night One—Wednesday March 13th 7:00pm

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Call to Worship		Pastor Havis
Processional		Victorious Voices Choir
Litany		Minister
Prayer		Minister
Scripture	I Samuel Chapter 13	Minister
Music Ministry		Victorious Voices Choir
Testimony		
Praise Dance		Mrs. Tamika McCombs
Offering		Central CME Stewards
Music Ministry		Victorious Voices Choir
The Preached Word		Pastor Patricia A. Havis
Alter Call & Invitation		Rev. Keith Watkins
Music Ministry	God Is Here	Victorious Voices Choir
Uncover the Wounds		Pastor Patricia Havis
Benediction		Pastor Patricia Havis

LITURGY



Leader: The church needs renewal. In today's world Christians are seeking ways to find healing, hope and salvation. Christians want to get deep unmet spiritual needs met in the church. The church will become renewed when the person of the Holy Spirit is allowed to touch people in their deep and most intimate places of hurt.

People: Many women and girls are unable to get their needs met. Women and girls voices have been silenced and cut off. We believe in woman power and that if we lift up the name of Jesus, we will be able to break free and become the women God designed us to be.

Leader: With God's help and the Holy Spirit's guiding and urgings, girls and women will leave this revival saved and renewed. The Jesus in me will help at least one woman or girl get healed and made whole. She can save her family, who can save her church, who can save her neighborhood, who can save her community. The community can save a city or town. The city or town can save a state. The state can save a nation. One nation can save another nation and then save the world. All this is possible if one woman or girl gets restored and becomes victorious.

Together: Entering into a relationship with Jesus Christ and locking into the fact that Jesus knows the shame of every naked body, every unsolicited breath breathed upon us, every person who took authority over us, every person that violated and desecrated us are forgiven and can no longer define us. Jesus was beaten and took our humiliation [1] so that we could transform into who God intended us to be. We are ready to either claim or reclaim who we are.

Leader: We can ask for forgiveness of our sins and know they are forgiven. We find and reconnect with the good within us and become reconstituted and remodeled. We ask forgiveness for the sin and the shame that was forced upon us.

Together: We Previously Have Received No Vindication Or Justice[2] For The Sins Thrust Upon Us. We Had Become Victims But Tonight We Become Victors!

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[1]Elaine A., Health, *We Were the Least of These: Reading the Bible with Survivors of Sexual Abuse* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazo Press, 2011).

[2]Marie Damanyanthi Niles Fortune, Notes from January Intensive, United Theological Seminary, Plenary Speaker 2013.

Night Two - Thursday March 14th 7:00pm

I KNOW WHERE TO FIND HELP

Call to Worship		Pastor Havis
Processional		Victorious Voices Choir
Litany		Minister
Prayer		Minister
Scripture	Mark 5:25-30	Minister
Music Ministry		Victorious Voices Choir
Testimony		
Praise Dance Mrs.		Alesia Patterson
Offering		Central CME Stewards
Music Ministry		Victorious Voices Choir
The Preached Word		Pastor Patricia A. Havis
Alter Call & Invitation		Rev. Faith Allen
Music Ministry	He'll Take The Pain Away	Victorious Voices Choir
Benediction		Pastor Patricia Havis

Night Three – Friday March 15th 7:00pm

A Change Gone Come

Call to Worship		Pastor Havis
Processional		Victorious Voices Choir
Litany		Minister
Prayer		Minister
Scripture	II Corinthians 5:17	Minister
Music Ministry		Victorious Voices Choir
Testimony		
Praise Dance		Mrs. Alesia Patterson
Word of Encouragement		Dr. Joseph Gordon
Offering		Central CME Stewards
Music Ministry		Victorious Voices Choir
The Preached Word		Pastor Patricia A. Havis
Invitation		Dr. Faith Allen
Music Ministry	Healing	Victorious Voices Choir
Libation & Regenerating New Birth		Pastor Patricia Havis
Benediction		Pastor Patricia Havis

Prayer

Dear Lord and Savior,

On this night we take back our power. We take it back. We refuse to allow Satan or evil to have victory over us any longer. We will not let others define us. We do not have to own someone else's sin. We do not have to torture ourselves for sins thrust upon us.

We are not sentenced to a lifetime of pain and suffering. We can shed past suffering and move into healing. Sexual immorality and domestic violence is not to be tolerated. We were not at fault. It is not right for anyone to hurt us. It is not right for us to behave as though we caused the sin.[3]

When we connect with Christ as the Lord who arose from the tomb just for us,[4] we become a new creation. When we connect to Christ's healing power, we are healed. Everything, which has kept us in desolation, and bondage to sin, is broken tonight. These sins will no longer have a stronghold on our lives because tonight we are letting the healing power of Jesus' love into our hearts. Tonight we claim that we are free. We break the chains to the weight of the sins we have been carrying around on our hearts.

Lord you have given is permission to disconnect from the pain someone caused us; and we disconnect, we forgive our persecutor. Because you have taken us in: we forgive them.

AMEN.

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[3]Patricia A. Havis, Prayer, March 14, 2013.

[4]Ibid. Heath. 2011.

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR YOU

Uncover Sexual Abuse

Many sexual abuse survivors suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), says Melinda Turner, a social worker with a managed care company in San Francisco. "PTSD happens as a result of an event that caused a tremendous amount of sustained fear or threat to your life," she says. Symptoms include flashbacks, intense distress, recurrent dreams and difficulty sleeping and concentrating. Survivors may also have an exaggerated fear of others, outburst of anger and depression marked by feelings of hopelessness, crying spells, and a withdrawal from the routines of life. Others may suffer from physical illnesses. [5]

"Identifying these issues does not necessarily mean you were sexually abused, but knowing the symptoms may enable you to acknowledge the past abuse and seek help," Turner says. If you answer two or three or more of the questions in Turner's checklist, or answer any one on the "What Happened" checklist, you were most likely abused and

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[5]Robin Stone, *No Secrets No Lies: How Black Families Can Heal From Sexual Abuse* (New York, NY, Harlem Moon, 1997), 32.

should talk to a trained therapist about your feelings. If you have thoughts of harming or killing yourself, seek help from a trained mental health professional immediately. You should go to a hospital immediately.[6]

What Happened Checklist[7]

1. Was I touched or kissed in a way that made me feel uncomfortable?
2. Were words with sexual overtones used to describe my body?
3. Were words with sexual acts used in my presence?
4. Was I made to view sexual acts?
5. Was I made to pose for sexual photos or movies?
6. Was I made to put my mouth on someone else's genitals or breast?
7. Was I raped or penetrated?
8. Was the person who did this in a more powerful role than me? (bigger, stronger and older in authority)

HELP YOURSELF[8]

Signs of Abuse – Questions to Ask

1. Is it difficult for you to trust others?
2. Do you feel threatened when people get too close to you (emotionally or physically)
3. Do you always feel older than the people around you?
4. Do you have problems with sustaining a love relationship?

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[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid. Stone., 32-33.

5. Do you find unavailable men more attractive than the available ones?

6. Do you have trouble establishing and maintaining boundaries, such as saying no to others?

7. Do you have a number of different sexual partners at a time?

8. Do you feel disconnected from your body?

9. Do you feel that you are secretive or wearing a mask all of the time?

10. Do you feel dirty or ashamed?

11. Do you feel that you are different from other people, as if there is something bad about you?

12. Do you feel like a victim?

13. Do you have persistent feelings of low-self esteem or self-hatred?

14. Do you have a hard time taking care of yourself (for instance, getting enough rest, eating properly or grooming)?

15. Do you feel unable to defend or protect yourself?

16. Do you use work or good deeds for others as a way to feel good enough to compensate for low self-esteem?

17. Are you prone to depression or anxiety attacks?

18. Do you always expect that people are going to harm or abuse you?

19. Do you engage in risky sexual behaviors (for instance, with strangers, or sex parties with others) to make yourself feel wanted or loved?

20. Do you believe that you are only good for sex?

21. When making love, do you feel such fear or anxiety in your body that you desire to be somewhere else?

22. Do you feel that you have to control everything about lovemaking in order to enjoy it?[9]

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[9]Robin D Stone, *No Secrets No Lies: How Black Families Can Heal From Sexual Abuse* (New York, NY: Harlem Moon, 1997).

Information About Sexual Abuse

Fast Facts

1. African-American women are less likely than White women to involve police in cases of child sexual abuse.

2. One study shows that Black girls were more often abused than Whites by relatives other than their fathers. Often the offender was an uncle.

3. The Study also showed that Black women reported being "more upset" for greater long-term effects, and experienced more chronic life experiences from sexual abuse than white women.

4. 47% of Black American woman have high levels of depressive symptoms, compared with 37% of white women, 43% Hispanic women, and 41% Asian women.

5. Women who report experiencing difficulty paying for basic needs such as food, telephone service, gas and electricity are more than twice as likely (68%) to experience a high level of depressive symptoms as women who report no such difficulty.

6. Up to 66% of pregnant teens report histories of sexual abuse.

7. In a Study of college students, those women at higher risk of sexual abuse were the ones who said they were not close to their mothers or received little or no attention from parents.

Boys & Men

1. 93% of offenders against young males were known to them. Males are more often abused by someone they know who is outside the family.

2. Nearly half (48%) of abused boys said they had not talked with anyone about their physical or sexual abuse, compared with 29% of abused girls. When asked with whom they shared their feelings of being overwhelmed, or depressed, boys were more likely than girls to say, "No one."

3. Abused boys were twice as likely to smoke or drink frequently or to have abused drugs.

Hypothesis

We're too busy for healing. Our enslaved ancestors spent their days and lives working, and tending to others. Emancipation came and went, and most of them found they were still struggling to meet basis needs. For many, life meant labor—sunup to sundown—and no time for self or family. Lynching left our people terrorized; poverty kept us hungry and racism kept us fighting. Our biggest job was survival—to keep on keeping on. And that pushed spiritual, emotional, psychological and spiritual on the to do list. Sadly, nearly 150 years after emancipation, our priorities are still the same. Many of us don't talk about our spiritual, emotional, and psychological challenges; we simply were not reared to do that. [10] Sexual abuse is a major public health problem, which is made more complex by the attitudes of our society in addressing issues involving sex.[11]

Where Is God? Where Is Jesus?

God has not forgotten about you. Why did God allow you to go through such a horrific ordeal and suffer in silence while living in terror? God did no such thing. Evil abounds, *But God Was With You!* Perhaps you do not believe or understand it. Look through this lens. You might be wounded but you are still here. Perhaps, God allowed you to survive so you could prevent others from living in terror.

The Black Church, churches, serving large African American populations, is not doing everything it can to assist victimized persons to deal with issues surrounding abuse, terror and vindication. Healing can occur through the power and person of the Holy Spirit for abused girls and women.

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[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid., Introduction.

There is atonement for abused women. Woman can move from victim to victors. The solution is pneumatology. Getting into a new relationship with Christ and allowing the person of the Holy Spirit to take over, makes women victorious over sin. Woman can take back their power and become authentic selves and not live in shame. Women can experience grace and begin to renew. The Holy Spirit allows us to forgive and to be forgiven.

When African American girls and women are brought into a closer communion with God, connect with Jesus Christ's saving power through prophetic Holy Spirit led preaching focused on their oppression and needs; their healing begins.

"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything has passed away, everything becomes new" (2 Cor 5:17). The good news is that receiving and connecting to Christ makes it possible for women to shed the pain from abuse and the damage done to their self-esteem, value and worth. Women can become victorious. They can release the shame, guilt, and self-hatred. They become whole when the person of the Holy Spirit has power to eradicate evil and provide transformation. The Bible supports this supposition. This researcher supports Paul with this statement.

> Either we will believe the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of life and power of all unity and holiness, or we will live as though the Spirit id incapable of making a real difference in our lives. Either we will seek the Spirit in true repentance and humble expectation, or we will ignore our own peril the very source of our ongoing life together.[12]

In his public execution before a jeering crowd, Jesus experienced exactly the kind of objectification that is inflicted upon women, men, and children whose naked bodies are broken for the sexual entertainment of others. Through the cross, Emmanuel, God is

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[12]Jason Vickers, *Minding the Good Ground A Theology for Church Renewal* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press 2011).

with us, took his own body and spirit, the humiliation and the agony of our sexual abuse. Jesus carried the shame of every victim's cross—those of use who survived and those who did not—to his own cross, disarming ruler and authorities," the arbiters of shame, so that they no longer have the power to define us (Col 2: 9-15). Atonement for survivors means that through the power of Jesus' resurrection, we are no longer doomed to live our lives out the broken consequences of abuse.[13]

Entering into a relationship with Jesus Christ and locking into the fact that Jesus knows the shame of every naked body, every unsolicited breath breathed upon you, every person who took authority over you, every person that violated and desecrated us have been forgiven and can no longer define us. Jesus was beaten and took our humiliation so that we could transform into who God intended for us to be. We are ready to either claim or reclaim the women that we are.[14]

We can ask for forgiveness of our sins and know they are forgiven. We reconnect with the good within and become reconstituted and remodeled. We are no longer sinners. We are good. We are both sinners and saints at the same time. The world is broken but yet created and correct. We are damaged and perverted yet healed and renewed.

When victims recognize that it is GOD'S plan for the mind, body, and spirit to be connected to one another and God, they can be saved. Saving knowledge, knowledge that bears decisively on the meaning, of wholeness, and fulfillment of our life in relationship

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[13]Ibid., Heath.

[14]Ibid.

to God and others is when African American girls and women enter into the realm of wholeness.

When abused Black girls and women recognize that God's plan for humanity is wholeness; that we are our bodies and our embodied actions are a sum total of who we are then perhaps old things will be able to pass away. This newness takes deep work and prayer. Sin does not have the last word. Terror does not have the last word; God does.

APPENDIX B

REVIVAL EFFECTIVENESS SCALE FORMS

Comments from Revival Effectiveness Scale forms

These are actual comments written on the comments section. Not all comments were used but this is a sample including those favorable and unfavorable.

Comments written by girls and women

1. I was thinking who I could help because I didn't ever realize until something in my spirit said, you were abused and you were an abuser. Over forty years ago with your first husband. He fought you, stole from you and you fought back, cursed and acted a fool right along with him. I guess I forgot about that because thirty-one years ago, I married a Godly man and never experienced that treatment again. I hid all this for so long, that I thought I was a victim. But now I can say, I am victorious! Thank you Pastor Havis, Do this again because it has literally touched my family.

2. I have attended many revivals but this one was world changing, the world is now a better place, inside of women, so thus the world. The effect of this revival has changed lives, which will ripple on and on. God showed out! Thank you Pastor Havis.

3. I was a victim of domestic violence. When I rejoined the church so did he. I felt I couldn't even have my own religion or the God I believed in without him. Through prayer and faith, I got the nerve to get my keys back put an alarm on my house and move forward. I don't think I let it go until tonight. I thought I had. I would have testified but men there made me apprehensive. But going to the altar helped me.

4. God knew the outcome of this revival. Rev. Havis was phenomenal in preaching the word each night. From the beginning of the revival it was extraordinary. My pastor let me know that what happened to me and many other women wasn't our fault. The second night sermon of the woman with the issue of blood was magnificent. Then the culmination of the command from Jesus to the lame man was icing on the cake. Then there was music. It blended perfectly with the sermon. This revival was anointed. Lives were touched and healing began for some while others received information that they are victorious. I feel blessed to say that I am unburdened because of this revival.

5. This revival helped me to restore what was taken from me. I am free and unburdened. This revival was needed because it allowed not only the pastor to minister, but it also allowed other women to minister to others by telling their story to others. I hope there will be a ministry that will grow from this so that other women and men can have a place to share and heal.

6. I was touched by all aspects of the revival. The testimonies were very powerful and touched my heart. The women's choir was phenomenal. Pastor, please continue to let the Lord use you to impact the lives of women.

7. I am grateful and thankful to God for Pastor Havis courage to deal with a subject that is whispered about; but, not uncovered for true healing.

8. 'It's Friday morning and I am still on a spiritual high from the Thursday night revival. I truly believe that I have regained my strength, joy and happiness. It is always a good thing to be reminded that if you stay prayed up, keep your mind on Jesus and read the word, God will see you through. I am somebody. Thank you Pastor I will always pray for you.

9. No men! Absolutely no men. The choir was awesome. Such a sensitive subject might reach more women when it is all women. The presence of men can be a barrier still. I will be back on Thursday.

10. I could really relate to the revival. I knew I wasn't the only one going through something but I've always felt alone and the preacher touching on certain situations made me feel like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders because I left my problems at the altar.

11. Real issues, real, word. Real deliverance.

12. This revival shed light in my life. I had been walking in darkness from domestic violence.

13. Nice to know that I am not alone in this walk and to hear all the stories of women that have overcome the damage done and are still walking with their head held high. My healing began the moment that I walked back in to God's house. I know that I am on the right path. All was wonderful and full of love.

14. At times the music drowned the preaching as well as the choir. The song selections were appropriate. During the preaching if the instrumentation could just accompany the pastor until the end it would be more effective. At times this drew my focus away from the message, the prayers, and the lyrics to the songs.

15. Even though I have not been abused, I believe this revival will help me with someone who has been. My mother was physically abused when my father had been drinking, so indirectly it had an affect on me.

16. We need one every six month.

17. For the last two days I have been feeling down in a dark spot but thank you God that you lead me to this house tonight for I was truly blessed. The songs,

praise dancing, the prayers, and the preached word. Thank you Pastor Havis for a powerful word.

18. It made me look in the miracle of myself.

19. This is a subject that was long overdue. But until now, it was suppressed in many victims because it wasn't something you discuss at the "dinner table."

    Thanks to this revival, victims now know they are not alone and that God does have an ear for the afflicted.

20. This revival was very uplifting and taught me things I had no idea was happening to me were out of the norm.

21. I want to say thank you Rev. Havis for letting the Lord use you and for you following through with the visions that you received. My life is better for hearing your messages and the testimonies from others. Thank you for loving us enough to share with us.

22. This revival has been very strengthening, empowering educational and most of all very uplifting! Thank you Pastor Havis and the C.M.E. Church. You have been a blessing!

23. I am better person for coming out tonight!

24. This revival assured me that I am a woman of importance equal to the best and I surely am a child of the King and go let other women know they can change their lives with God who can heal all hurts and you can hold your head up and be victorious!

25. I like that we were dressed down. Music selections fit well. Missed first night information for the types of abuse that exist and how often. Scriptures fit the daily themes and filled my spirit along with the message.

26. It was very powerful!!

27. This revival reminded me where the Lord has brought me from. I am victor of thirty-five years plus. I owe it all to the Lord.

28. Very informative on a spiritual level.

Comments Written By Men

1. This was what we in the church needed. We needed this revival. I think we need this kind of revival for the city of Detroit. We thank you for bringing this revival.

2. Talked about things that needed to be talked about on a regular basis.

3. In the church all subjects must be addressed. This was long over due. We are not at war. And more times than not we are at war with ourselves.

4. This type of program is right on time and long past due. May God Bless you for you are a true visionary.

Comments Turned in a Post Revival And Not Included On Revival Effectiveness Scale.

1. As a sixty one year old woman who attended the Revival –"Victims to Victor", this is victorious in the word of God. The program allows us to depend on God for living a gracious and Godly life. We can do all things through Christ, which is our mediator. We do not have to be abused, disrespected or neglected by anyone. Also we should not do these things to anyone. We will live in God's holiness. We have victory in God's heart.

2. A past preacher on Mother's Day insulted single women saying they were responsible for many of today's problems. This preaching helped at this revival. *(This writer makes the assumption that the preacher was a man).*

3. The information that Pastor Havis provided for the Victims to Victors Revival was inspirational for me because I did not realize that even though there are a lot of people who are men and women; and she let them know that they are not alone. With God's help and Holy Spirit guiding them, they can be saved and renewed. She also inspired me to reach out and help others who have suffered or are suffering from neglect or abuse. I thank her for letting me be a part of her spiritual word.

APPENDIX C

FORMS AND INFORMATION SHARING

SELF EVALUATION SHARING PAGE

(Please share with the researcher about this session)

Name

Date

SURVEY OF KNOWLEDGE
Pre / Post Revival

Check One - True or False

1. Sexual Abuse is a major public health problem, which is made more complex by the attitudes of our society in addressing issues involving sex.
   T _____ F___

2. Always report any type of abuse to authorities.
   T____ F____

3. Black girls were abused more often by an uncle than White girls.
   T___ F____

4. If anyone touches you in a way or uses word with sexual overtones to describe your body; that is considered abuse.
   T_____ F____

5. If you were made to view sexual acts or made to pose for sexual photos or movies; that are considered abuse.
   T___ F ___

6. Reports show that Black women were "more upset" and experienced greater longer –term effects resulting in more negative life experiences than White Women.
   T ____ F _____

7. Being forced to touch someone else's genitals or breasts or forced to put your mouth on someone else's genitals or breasts is considered abuse.
   T _____ F _____

8. Unwanted sexual penetration is considered abuse
   T ____ F ___

9. If someone tells an off-colored or unwanted joke sexual in nature which makes you feel uncomfortable; that is considered abuse.
   T _____ F ___

10. Being unable to recall parts of your childhood is a symptom of abuse.
    T _____ F ___

11. Date rape is sexual abuse
T ___ F ____

12. Allowing husbands or boyfriends to beat you repeatedly may be a symptom of abuse experienced early on.
T _____ F ____

13. In the bible the word concubine is used often. Everywoman who lives in violence whether suffering physical, sexual, emotional, verbal economic and spiritual violence is a concubine.

T _____ F_____

14. Words, looks and gestures with sexual overtones are abuse.
T _____ F ____

15. Faith is fundamental to ending sexual and domestic terror
T ___ F ____

16. Women who report experiencing difficulty paying for basic needs such as food, telephone service, gas, and electricity are more prone to experience a high level of depressive symptoms and have experienced abuse in their lives.

T ___ F ___

17. Healing can occur through the power and person of the Holy Spirit for abused girls and women
T ____ F ____

18. The church is doing everything it can to assist girls and women to deal with issues surrounding abuse
T ___ F ____

19. We should always believe a child if they say they have been abused or battered or touched inappropriately.
T ____ F ____

20. Authorities act responsively to a girl or woman's cry for help.
T_____

Test collated with following books:

Blackmon, Janice D. Blackmon. Awakening Sleeping Beauty: How Victims of Domestic Violence Reclaim Their Birthright of Wholeness (The United States of American: Xulon Press 2011).

Heath, Elaine A., We Were the Least of These: Reading the Bible with Survivors of Sexual Abuse (Grand Rapids: Brazo Press, 2011).

Stone, Robin D., No Secrets No Lies: How Black Families Can Heal from Sexual Abuse: (New York, Harlem Moon, 1997).

Fortune, Marie. 2013 Faith Trust Institute/ www.faithinstitute.org

INFORMED CONSENT

Title of Study: *From Victims to Victors Ministry Model Vindicating African American Women from the Terror of Domestic and Sexual Violence.*

Principle Researcher: Rev. Patricia A. Havis, Pastor, Central CME Church, Detroit, Michigan, Detroit, Michigan

Address: 7600 Tireman Detroit, Michigan

Phone: (313) 931-0592 Cell Phone: [redacted]

E-mail: pastorpat16@comcast.net
(contact the researcher by phone or e-mail if you have any questions or concerns)

Background: You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate it is important that you know what the study is about. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. If you have any questions or need more information, please feel free to ask the researcher. Afterwards you may give your written consent.

Purpose of Study: This research is taking place to identify African American girls and women that grew up in the church or currently attend church regularly and have been sexually abused or experienced other forms of domestic abuse and still live in terror or and are still healing. This researcher believes that healing is ongoing.

Violence of any type, especially sexual assault is shame based and a secret act and has kept girls and women in bondage. In many instances it continues to do so. They are unable to live whole and satisfying lives as a result of the terror introduced into their lives. Girls and women feel like victims and some are working toward becoming advocates.

The researcher will test this hypothesis. The researcher will address, uncover and provide information and encouragement. These tools will help the girls and women become to move toward liberation. These tools should allow them to turn toward living transformed and healthy lives.

Your obligations:

1. Your expected time commitment for this study will begin during the month of February 2013. The researcher will personally interview you and ask you to tell your story.
2. On March 13, 14, 15, 2013, you are expected to attend a three night revival at Central C.M.E. Church.
3. You are expected to complete a revival evaluation form each evening to be turned in the same evening.

4. You are expected to take notes during the revival and prepare written feedback regarding your feelings and attitudes during and post revival. The due date your narrative notes are due on April 16, 2013.
5. You are expected to attend one meeting with the group of other pre-selected participants on Thursday May 9, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. You may select to disclose what you choose to disclose. The researcher will not share any part of your story with other participants.
6. You are expected to talk in person or by telephone once a month during the months of March, April, May, June and July of 2013.

Risks: There are none. All survey material, interviews and information are confidential and if your story is used in the researcher's dissertation, your name will be changed for anonymity.

Benefits: There is no financial benefit or cost for this study. The researcher and researcher participants (i.e. you) receive no financial compensation. Offerings raised at the revival will be donated to the church. Worship participants will be given a small stipend for their service.

The researcher is praying that a group will develop from this group or the larger participants at the revival and will continue on at Central C.M.E. Church.

The researcher believes the spiritual benefits of healing, restoration, purging, and liberation are immeasurable. The researcher believes that the discovery of the person of the Holy Spirit will renew and transform girls and women from victors into victors.

Consent: By signing this consent I confirm and that I have read and understood the information and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I agree to participate in the interview, study, revival, seminar and follow-up with the researcher Patricia A. Havis for her matriculation toward a Doctor of Ministry Program. I understand that my interviews may be, but not necessarily published in the doctoral thesis using an assumed name. My identity is protected and will not be revealed.

I agree to continue with the project from the beginning to the end. I understand that my participation is voluntary and not under any duress and sharing of personal information is to be used to assist others in their growth, recovery and development.

_____

Signature Date

REVIVAL EFFECTIVENESS SCALE

Please rate scale from 1-5.
*Five is the **most** effective and one is the **least.***

1. Overall how would you rate the revival?
   1____ 2____ 3__ 4__ 5__

2. Did you experience any type of spiritual change?
   1____ 2___ 3_____ 4_____ 5___

3. Rate the effectiveness of the music.
   1 __ 2___ 3__ 4___ 5__

4. Rate the effectiveness of the prayers.

   1__ 2__ 3__ 4__ 5__

5. Rate the effectiveness of the preaching.
   1__ 2____ 3 ___ 4____ 5___

6. Rate the effectiveness of the liturgies.
   1___ 2___ 3___ 4____ 5____

7. How much did the revival impact your life?
   1____ 2____ 3____ 4___ 5____

Comments if any regarding the revival. (Use the back if necessary)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Name (Optional) / Date

APPENDIX D

REVIVAL EFFECTIVENESS FEEDBACK

Revival Effectiveness Feedback

Data Analysis

Base Number of pieces of paper collected - Ninety one (91).

Information reported below is contained within the 91 forms

Night one – March 13, 2013
Seventy (70) pieces collected

Night two- March 14, 2013
Seventy-eight (78) pieces collected

Night three – March 15, 2103
Sixty eight (68) pieces collected

Evaluated all three night simultaneously
Fifty eight (58) pieces collected

Evaluated night one only - 0
Evaluated night two only – 12
Evaluated night three only – 7
Evaluated nights one and two only – 9

Evaluated nights two and three only – 2
Evaluated nights one and three only – 3

Total Nights Evaluations Scores

Five is the most effective and one is the least.

Question One
Overall how would you rate the revival?
(1) = 0 (2) = 1 (3) = 2 (4) = 3 (5) = 85

Question Two
Did you experience any type of spiritual change?
(1) = 0 (2) = 1 (3) = 7 (4) = 32 (5) = 48

Question Three
Rate the effectiveness of the music.
(1) = 0 (2) = 1 (3) = 3 (4) = 15 (5) = 71

Question Four
Rate the effectiveness of the prayers.
(1) = 0 (2) = 0 (3) = 3 (4) = 15 (5) = 73

Question Five
Rate the effectiveness of the preaching.
(1) = 0 (2) = 1 (3) = 1 (4) = 3 (5) = 86

Question Six
Rate the effectiveness of the liturgies.
(1) = 0 (2) = 1 (3) = 5 (4) = 12 (5) = 70

Question Seven - How much did the revival impact your life?
(1) = 0 (2) = 2 (3) = 8 (4) = 14 (5) = 66

APPENDIX E

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Flint Demographics

Population	33,369
Male	15, 720
Female	17,971
Married	26,900
Single	7,057
Separated	506
Widowed	2,286
Divorced	3,683
Number of Households	13, 972
Average Household Size	2.36

Flint Household Information

Number of Households	13, 972
Households: Family	9,025
Households: Non-Family	4,947
Households: With Children	4,620
Age 0-4	1,996
Age 5-9	2,339
Age 10-14	2,389
Age 15-19	2,390
Age 20-24	2,030
Age 25-34	4,197
Age 35-44	5,220
Age 45-54	4,574
Age 55-59	1,667
Age 60-64	1,460

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Age 65-74	2,783
Age 75-84	1,900
Age 85+	746

Flint Income and Jobs

$0-10,000	35
$10,000 – 14,999	941
$15,000 – 24,999	2,261
$25,000 – 34,999	1,896
$35,000 – 49,999	2,339
$50,000 – 74,999	2,856
$75,000 – 99,999	1,342
$100,000 – 149,000	805
$150,000 – 199,999	203
Over $200,000	232

Flint Education

Less than 9th Grade	1,001
Some High School	2,487
High School Grade	7,443
Some College	5,804
Associate Degree	1,844

Bachelor's Degree	2,219
Graduate Degree	1,735
Percentage High School or Higher	84.5%

Flint Residential Statistics

Average Home Sales Price	$98,600
Total Housing Units	14,867
Owner Occupied	9,586
Rental Occupied	4,386
Rental Vacancy Rate	9.3%
Vacant Housing Units	892
Median Travel Time to Work	22 minutes
Transportation to Work: Public	107
Transportation to Work: Drive/Carpool	1,295
Transportation to Work: Walk/Bike/Other	275
Work at Home	371

Flint Ethnicity Statistics

White	5,707
African American	26,949
Hispanic or Latino	784
Asian	878
American Indian or Alaska Native	556

Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	24
Other	481

Flint Crime

Population	118,256
Violent Crime	3,070
Murder and Nonviolent Manslaughter	54
Forcible Rape	143
Robbery	627
Aggravated Assault	2,246
Robbery	627
Property Crime	8,117
Burglary	3,058
Larceny-theft	3,538[1]

In reviewing the ethnicity statistics, it shows that whites have moved to the nearby Flint Township or Grand Blank. These areas have a different tax base and governance system. Blacks that remain do provide the city with a strong tax base.

This information paints a picture of a city that can benefit from what churches offer. It is a community that needs financial, spiritual, and governmental, city, and clergy leadership and support. As the pastor of St. James I attend community meetings surrounding issues such as crime, mortgage lending, community revitalization and other issues that will assist St. James in the uphill climb back to better conditions.

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[1]National Relocation Statistics 2007-2011, (accessed January 2013) www.Nationalreolcation.com.

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